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SKETCHES
OF
SCOTTISH CHURCH HISTORY:

EMBRACING THE PERIOD FROM THE
REFORMATION TO THE REVOLUTION.

BY THE
REV. THOMAS M'CRIE,
AUTHOR OF THE "LIFE OF DR. M'CRIE," &c.

VOL. I.

Fourth Edition.

**ISSUED BY THE COMMITTEE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF
THE FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND, FOR THE PUBLICATION OF THE
WORKS OF SCOTTISH REFORMERS AND DIVINES.**

JOHN JOHNSTONE,
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PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

THE substance of the following Sketches was originally delivered in the form of lectures; and the first portion of them, embracing the period preceding the restoration of Charles II., appeared some time since in a popular religious periodical. The author having been requested to publish the whole in a separate volume, they now appear in a somewhat altered form, and with considerable additions; presenting a connected and concise history of the church of Scotland from the reformation to the revolution.

Having been composed chiefly for the benefit of the young, with the view of inducing them to take an interest in the church of their fathers, and adapted to a popular audience, without the most distant prospect of publication, these Sketches will be found to differ, both in style and matter, from ordinary historical writings. The circumstances now mentioned will account, not only for the absence of polish in the composition, but for the frequent introduction into

the text of authorities which might otherwise have found a more appropriate place in the margin. The popular and almost conversational tone thus imparted to the narrative it was found impossible to alter, without recasting the whole into another mould, and constructing a new work. The object is rather to exhibit the more prominent and characteristic features of our church history, than to enter into details, or to develop the internal character of the church in her ecclesiastical acts and proceedings. Though the volume has been unavoidably extended to a much larger size than was originally anticipated, either by the author or his publisher, it has been considered advisable, at the expense of swelling it still more, to insert in the appendix the correspondence between the author and Mr. Patrick F. Tytler, on the alleged participation of John Knox in the conspiracy against Riccio.

To the high professions of impartiality with which some historians have ushered their productions into the world, the author is not disposed to attach much value; having seldom found such professions realized, and being convinced that no writer of church history who has any principles to which he attaches importance, can describe the scenes and characters with which these principles are identified, without imparting to the description more or less of the colour of his own mind. The author candidly avows himself a presbyterian of the old school; and he has been at no pains to conceal

his sentiments. In support of the main facts of the history, which have been amply authenticated in larger works accessible to all, he considered it superfluous to adduce authorities. But he has advanced no statement, the truth of which he did not endeavour to ascertain by personal investigation; and, in disputed cases, the authorities to which he refers will speak for themselves.

The leading facts of our ecclesiastical history, so far as is requisite to form a candid and enlightened judgment on them, are placed beyond all dispute, having been substantially admitted by respectable historians of all different creeds and principles. The discrepancies which appear in their accounts, and which have induced some to question the credibility of all history, consist chiefly in the opposite interpretations which they put on the same facts, and the different conclusions which they draw from the same events—interpretations and conclusions which will vary, according to the author's sentiments and prepossessions, and vary with regard to the facts and events of the present day, as well as those of the past.

EDINBURGH, *August* 12, 1841.

NOTE TO THE PRESENT EDITION.

AFTER three editions of this work had appeared, the author was unexpectedly requested to publish a fourth, under the auspices, and for the use of, the "Committee of the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland for the Publication of the Works of Scottish Reformers and Divines." With a request emanating from such a quarter he cordially and instantly complied. As by this medium of publication, the Sketches will be likely to secure a publicity which the highest hopes of authorship could scarcely have anticipated, the present edition has undergone a patient and minute revisal, that it might be rendered more worthy of so wide a diffusion. The alterations now made, have been chiefly with regard to phraseology, not sentiment or fact; and in its present form, it is hoped that the work will prove useful and acceptable to those numerous readers to whom it is now respectfully addressed.

T. M'C.

EDINBURGH, *October 7, 1846.*

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SKETCHES, &c.

CHAPTER I.

State of religion before the reformation—Popery in Scotland—Origin of the reformation—The early martyrs of the reformation—Patrick Hamilton—Stratton—Kennedy and Russell—Woman at Perth—Persecuting character of popery.

BEFORE entering on the history of the reformation, it may be necessary, in order to appreciate the full value and importance of that glorious deliverance, to take a brief survey of the state of the world, and particularly of our own land, previous to its introduction.

Before this period, if we except the Waldenses, who inhabited the inaccessible fastnesses of the Alps, the followers of Huss in Bohemia, and the Lollards of Kyle in Scotland, there was not a nation in Christendom, and hardly any class of people, that had not bowed the knee to the authority of the Roman church.* The pope, pretending to be the vicar and representative of Jesus Christ, not in the lowliness of his character when on earth, in which he set an example to his followers, but in the splendour of his royal dignity in heaven, had risen to such a pitch of arrogance, as to assume the honours, not only of the head of the Church, but of supreme potentate and

* "All the world wondered after the beast."—Rev. xiii. 3.

plenipotentiary over all the kingdoms of the earth. Our Lord has said, "My kingdom is not of this world," teaching us that his church is distinct from, and independent of, worldly kingdoms, and claims no temporal dominion over men; but the church of Rome, in direct contravention of this statute, and interpreting literally those passages of scripture in which the glory of the church is portrayed under images drawn from earthly things, transformed herself into a worldly monarchy, and challenged, in civil as well as ecclesiastical affairs, the homage of the greatest princes of Europe. If at any time one of these monarchs ventured to disobey the mandates of the Italian priest who happened, for the time being, to be seated in the chair of St. Peter, he was immediately excommunicated, and his kingdom laid under an interdict; the effects of which were, that his subjects were absolved from their allegiance, and his assassination was declared a meritorious service, entitling the murderer to heaven—all other princes were summoned to make war against him—the churches throughout the country were shut up—the sacraments were suspended—the dead were buried in the highways, and the muffled bells rang a funeral peal, as if some fearful curse hung over the devoted land. In such circumstances, the stoutest monarchs had been made to tremble, and submit to the most humiliating penance. Two of them—one, the king of England, another, the king of France—were compelled to hold the pope's stirrup while he mounted on horseback; a third was ordered to lie prostrate on the earth, while the haughty pontiff, placing his foot on his majesty's neck, exclaimed, "Thou shalt tread upon the serpent, and trample on the dragon



and lion;" another was whipped by proxy, the cardinal of Lorraine having received the lashes on his bare back in the name of his royal master, lying flat, as D'Aubigné * expresses it, "like a mackerel on a gridiron;" while another (Henry IV., emperor of Germany), having offended the pope, travelled to his residence to beg his forgiveness; and there did he stand at the gate, barefooted and bareheaded, for the space of three days, ere "his Holiness" would admit him to his presence; and after all, the haughty pontiff deprived him of his crown, and transferred it to another.

The spiritual power claimed by the pope was, as it still is, not less extraordinary. Not content with assuming the prerogatives and even the titles of the Deity, the lordship of conscience, the gift of infallibility, and the power of absolving men from the consequences of sin in a future world, he went so far as to "exalt himself above the Most High." He presumed to consecrate vice, and dispense with the obligations of the divine law;† he invented new sins, and created new worlds in which they might be punished. Indulgences were openly sold for money, by which the deluded people were taught to believe that their guilt would be forgiven, and the souls of their departed friends redeemed out of a place which they called purgatory.

* The French historian, who flourished in the sixteenth century.

† Bellarmine, the standard author of the papists, goes so far as to aver, that "if the pope should command vice, and prohibit virtue, the Church would be bound to believe vice to be good, and virtue to be evil, unless she would sin against conscience." And the Romish canons teach that the pope "has a heavenly power to change the nature of things, that his will is instead of reason, nor is there any one that can say unto him, What doest thou?" (See Bruce's *Free Thoughts*, p. 20.)

Popery, however, with all its sanctified pretensions, was merely a vast conspiracy against the civil and religious liberties of mankind, the ramifications of which extended over nearly the whole earth, and every member of which, from the pontiff down to the meanest monk, was sworn to advance the interests of the body. Swarms of priests and confessors infested every country—penetrating, like the plague-frogs of Egypt, into the recesses of every family, from the chamber of the king down to the hut of the meanest cottager, and polluting everything they touched. This motley band, by means of auricular confession, made themselves masters of the secrets of every court, every household, and every bosom; a regular system of spiritual espionage was established, by which secret intelligence of every movement might be conveyed to head-quarters; and the whole complicated machinery, obeying the touch of some unseen hand, could be made to bear, with decided and irresistible effect, on the accomplishment of its designs.

Some may wonder how such a system of organized tyranny and oppression could have been tolerated so long without any combined attempt to shake it off. But we shall cease to wonder when we consult the scriptures, where we learn that the antichristian system is the master-piece of satanic cunning, expressly devised for deluding mankind—"whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders; and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish." We shall cease to wonder when we consider that popery is the religion of the corrupt heart of man, admirably contrived to gratify its pride, and sympathize with its lusts and passions; furnishing

pardons which may be procured for money, and presenting objects of worship which may be seen and handled; enlisting all the fine arts—architecture, music, painting, and statuary—into its service; appealing to every sense; enthraling the mind by the mystery and plausibility of its doctrines; fascinating the imagination by the gorgeousness of its ritual; and overwhelming reason itself by the very magnitude of its absurdities. And we shall cease to wonder, when we think on the power which the popish clergy were able to wield in support of their system; that the slightest heretical whisper was sufficient to consign the suspected person to the dungeons of the inquisition; and that, if he persisted in holding his opinions, he was doomed to expiate, in the flames of a cruel death, the crime of having dared to question the dogmas of the infallible church. For, after all, the church of Rome would have found it impossible to withstand the opposition which, from time to time, her arrogance provoked, had not “the kings of the earth,” intoxicated with “the wine of her fornication”—in other words, seduced, corrupted, and enslaved by her idolatries—“given their power to the beast,” by lending themselves to be the tools of her policy, and the executioners of her vengeance.

The state of religion in Scotland, immediately before the reformation, was deplorable in the extreme. Owing to the distance of this country from Rome, it was the more easy for the clergy to keep up in the minds of the people a superstitious veneration for the papal power; and our ancestors, who heard of the pope only in the lofty panegyrics of the monks, regarded him as a kind of demigod. Of christianity, almost nothing remained but the name.

Such of the doctrines of our holy religion as were retained in the profession of the church, were completely neutralized by heresies entirely subversive of them, or buried under a mass of superstitious observances. An innumerable multitude of saints were substituted in the place of Him who is the "one mediator between God and man." The exactions made by the priests were most rapacious. The beds of the dying were besieged, and their last moments cruelly disturbed, with the view of obtaining legacies to their convents. Nor did the grave itself put a period to their demands; for no sooner had the poor farmer or mechanic breathed his last, than the priest came and carried off his corpse-present; and if he died rich, his relations were sure to be handsomely taxed for masses to relieve his soul from purgatory. In Scotland alone, the number of convents, monasteries, and nunneries, amounted to upwards of a hundred and fifty.* These were inhabited by shoals of monks and friars; the monks being confined to their cloisters, and the friars permitted to wander about preaching and begging. The profligacy of the priests and higher clergy was notorious. The ordinances of religion were debased, "divine service was neglected, and, except on festival days, the churches (about the demolition of which such an outcry has been made by some) were no longer employed for sacred purposes, but served as sanctuaries for malefactors, places of traffic, or resorts for pastime."† One anecdote will sometimes show the state of matters better than whole pages of description. It seems that a chief part of the priest's office in those days was *cursing*. A letter of cursing cost a *plack*; and no-

* Appendix to Spotswood's History. † M'Crie's Life of Knox, i. 23.

thing was more common with the country people, when any part of their property, even the most trifling article, was amissing, than to pay the priest for cursing the thief. The process is thus described in a friar's sermon, quoted by Knox: "The priest whose duty and office it is to pray for the people, stands up on Sunday, and cries, 'Ane has tint a spurtill;* thair is a flail stoun beyond the burne; the guidwife on the other side of the gait has tint a horne spune: God's malison and mine I give to them that knows of this geir and restores it not!'" †

Persecution and the suppression of free inquiry were the only weapons by which such a system of corruption and imposition could defend itself. Every avenue by which truth might enter was carefully guarded; the scriptures were effectually kept from the view of the people by being locked up in a dead language; the most frightful pictures were drawn of those who had separated from the church of Rome; and if any person hinted dissatisfaction with the conduct of churchmen, or proposed the correction of abuses, he was immediately marked as a heretic, and if he did not consult his safety by flight, he was immured in a dungeon, or committed to the flames. Such were the power and the vigilance exercised by the clergy, that it was not safe to utter a word against them, even in one's sleep. It is recorded as a fact, that one man, a precentor or chanter as he was called, was actually apprehended, and had he not recanted, would have suffered death, merely because he was overheard saying in his sleep one night, "The deevil tak the priests, for they are a greedy pack!" ‡

* Lost a porridge-stick.

† Knox's History, p. 14.

‡ Ibid., p. 15.

As an illustration of the gross ignorance which then prevailed among the clergy, Buchanan informs us that in 1545, when severe laws were enacted against the reading of the New Testament, such was the blindness of the priests, that many of them, scandalized at the term *new*, maintained that it was a dangerous book lately written by Martin Luther, and cried out, "they would have no *new* testament; give them the *old* one!" * When Thomas Forrest, usually called dean Thomas, or the vicar of Dollar, was examined before the bishop of Dunkeld on a charge of having ventured to preach from the gospel or epistle for the day, and "shown the mysteries of the scripture to the people in their own language, so as to make the clergy detestable in their sight," the following conversation took place: "My joy, dean Thomas," said the bishop, "I love you well, and, therefore, I must give you my counsel how you shall rule and guide yourself." "I thank your lordship heartily," replied the vicar. "My joy, dean Thomas," continued the bishop, "I am informed that you preach the epistle or gospel every Sunday to the parishioners, and that you take not the cow nor the uppermost cloth from your parishioners; which thing is very prejudicial to the churchmen. My joy, it is too much to preach every Sunday; for in so doing you may make the people think that we should preach likewise. But it is enough for you when you find any good epistle, or any good gospel, that setteth forth the rights of the holy church, to preach that, and let the rest be." "Truly, my lord," said the vicar, "I have read the New Testament,

* Buch. Hist., p. 219, fol. edit.

and the Old, and all the epistles and gospels, and among them all I never could find any evil epistle, or any evil gospel; but if your lordship will show me the good and the evil epistles and gospels, then I shall preach the good and omit the evil." "I thank God," replied the bishop, with great vehemence, "I have lived well these many years, and *never knew either the Old or New Testament!* Therefore, dean Thomas, I will know nothing but my portuise and pontifical." * From this saying there arose a proverb which was commonly applied in Scotland, for many years after, to persons who were grossly ignorant: "Ye are like the bishop of Dunkeld, that kent neither new law nor auld." †

The fate of the vicar was decided in 1538. Having happened to quote, on his trial, the words of Paul, "I had rather speak five words with my understanding than ten thousand in an unknown tongue," he was asked where he found that? "In my book whilk is in my sleeve," answered the vicar. Upon this the public prosecutor started up, pulled the New Testament out of his sleeve, and holding it up before the people cried, "Behold he has *the book of heresy* in his sleeve, whilk makes all the pley ‡ in the kirk!" "Brother," said the vicar, "God forgive you; ye ought to say better, if ye pleased, than call the evangel of Jesus Christ the book of heresy; for I assure you, dear brother, there is nothing in this book but the life, latter will, and testament of our master and saviour Jesus Christ, written by the four evangelists for our comfort and instruction." This, however, could not avail him. The pope had

* * "My breviary and book of ceremonies."

† Spotswoode, p. 66; Row's MS. Hist., an. 1538.

‡ Confusion.

condemned the English Bible ; and the poor vicar, Testament and all, were burnt at the stake.*

But the time had now arrived, in the all-wise providence of God, when the eyes of men were to be opened to the abominations of this mystery of iniquity. The reformation, it is well known, commenced in Germany in 1517, when the heroic Martin Luther declared war against indulgences; but it was a considerable time before its blessed light reached the shores of Scotland. As we intend to confine ourselves to the history of the reformation in our own country, we shall not enter into any general account of its rise and progress abroad. But there is one feature of this glorious work which has been too much neglected by those who have written its history,† and to which, as it characterized the reformation in our own land no less than in others, we cannot refrain from adverting—we mean the strictly *religious character of its origin*. Without denying that many who took a prominent part in promoting it were actuated by worldly and selfish motives, and without overlooking the influence of secondary causes, which contributed to its advancement, such as the revival of learning, the invention of the art of printing, and the posture of political affairs in the countries where it was introduced—it ought never to be forgotten, that the reformation of religion in the church was the result of its revival in the souls of men. The first reformers were, without exception, men of piety and prayer—men who had deeply studied the Bible and their own hearts; and it was by discovering in the scriptures the true doctrines of salva-

* Pitscottie, p. 356.

† This was written before the appearance of the admirable "History of the Reformation," by Merle D'Aubigné.

tion which alone can purify the heart and pacify the conscience, that they were led first to see the corruptions of the church of Rome, and then to seek their removal. The reformation was the triumph of truth over error. It was the preaching of the pure gospel by the reformers, and especially the great doctrine of justification by faith through the righteousness of Christ, that gave its death-blow to the papal system. It is true, that had the reformers not received the support of the civil power, in all human probability the infant reformation would have been strangled at its birth, as it actually was in Spain and Italy, and the whole of Europe might have been yet lying under the dominion of antichrist. And it is a striking fact, that since the era of the reformation, protestantism has made little farther progress in Europe, and that those nations which refused to receive the protestant religion continue popish to this day; while in those that embraced it, the gospel continues to flourish in proportion to the zeal with which it was welcomed, and the purity in which it was established. But though, in accomplishing his gracious designs, God employs earthly means, and makes use of events in the political world, it is not the less on that account the work of God. History is a record of the operations of divine providence; but it is also a record of human guilt and folly, as exhibited not only in the malicious opposition of the enemies of religion, but in the unworthy motives and mistaken policy of its professed friends. And the first lesson which the student of church history requires to learn, is to distinguish between these two things—to remember that the work may be of God, though the manner of working is of man; and not to confound the cause of truth

and righteousness with the follies, the errors, and mismanagements of the instruments employed in advocating and advancing it.

The first person who was honoured to carry the tidings of the reformation to Scotland, and to seal them with his blood, was Patrick Hamilton.* This amiable and accomplished young gentleman was of noble extraction, and nearly allied to the royal family, being nephew of the earl of Arran and of the duke of Albany. He was destined for the church, but while pursuing his studies he acquired some knowledge of the reformed doctrine, and with the view of obtaining better information, he went abroad and paid a visit to Luther and other reformers in Germany. The result was, a deeper persuasion of the truth, accompanied

* Patrick Hamilton, though not the first who introduced or suffered for the reformed opinions in Scotland, may be considered the proto-martyr of the reformation, inasmuch as he was the first who suffered in that glorious cause, after the standard of the reformation had been unfurled by Luther. Before his time, two individuals, at least, had suffered martyrdom for their religious opinions—James Resby, an Englishman, and scholar of Wickliffe, who was burned in 1422; and Paul Craw, a Bohemian, and a follower of Huss, who underwent the same cruel fate at St. Andrews about ten years afterwards. In 1494, thirty persons, chiefly gentlemen and ladies of distinction, were accused of heretical sentiments, but conducted their defence with such boldness, that they were dismissed with an admonition. In 1525 there was an act of parliament passed, prohibiting the importation of Luther's books into Scotland, which, they said, had always "been clean of all sic filth and vice." If we may judge from the character of the Scots, who have been accused of being usually "wise behind the hand," it is highly probable that such books had already been introduced into this country.—*Life of Knox*, ii. 28. "The more the subject is investigated," says Dr. M'Crie, "the more clearly am I persuaded it will appear, that the opinions of Wickliffe had the most powerful and extensive influence upon the reformation. We can trace the existence of the lollards, in Ayrshire, from the time of Wickliffe to the days of George Wishart; and in Fife, they were so numerous, as to have formed the design of rescuing Patrick Hamilton by force on the day of his execution."—*Life of Melville*, i. 8.

with a strong and unconquerable desire to impart to his benighted countrymen the beams of that saving knowledge by which his own soul had been enlightened. His friends, aware of the danger to which he would expose himself by so doing, used every argument to dissuade him from making the attempt. But the motion was from God, and could not be resisted. On arriving in Scotland about the commencement of the year 1528, his spirit, like that of Paul, was stirred within him, when he beheld the ignorance and superstition which prevailed; and wherever he came, he denounced, in the plainest terms, the corruptions of the church. His clear arguments, aided by his fervent piety, mild manners, and exalted rank, could not fail to produce a powerful sensation; and the clergy took the alarm. James Beaton, archbishop of St. Andrews, was at that time primate of the church and chancellor of the kingdom—a cruel and crafty man, who scrupled at no means, however flagitious, for effecting his purposes. Afraid to proceed openly against Hamilton, he advised that he should be decoyed to St. Andrews, on the pretext of a friendly conference with him about his doctrine. The open-hearted young man eagerly embraced the proposal, and fell into the snare. It is needless to dwell on the revolting consequences. He was easily induced, by some insidious priests, to declare his sentiments. At the dead hour of night he was dragged from his bed, taken to the castle, and after confessing his faith before the archbishop, was condemned to be burned at the stake as an obstinate heretic. On the afternoon of Friday, February 28, 1528, this gentle and gracious youth was led to the place of execution, where a stake was fastened, with wood, coals, powder, and other inflammable materials

piled around it. When he came to the place, he stripped himself of his gown, coat, and bonnet, and giving them to a favourite servant, "These," he said, "will not profit in the fire; they will profit thee. After this, of me thou canst receive no commodity, except the ensample of my death, which I pray thee to bear in mind; for albeit it be bitter to the flesh, yet is it the entrance into eternal life, which none shall possess that deny Christ before this wicked generation." When bound to the stake he exhibited no symptom of fear, but commended his soul to God, and kept his eyes stedfastly directed towards heaven. The executioner set fire to the train of powder, which, however, did not kindle the pile, but severely scorched the side of the martyr. In this situation he remained unmoved, till a new supply of powder was brought from the castle. Meanwhile, the friars who stood around him, cruelly molested him, crying out, "Convert, heretic; call upon our Lady; say, *Salve regina*." "Depart, and trouble me not," he said, "ye messengers of Satan." One of them in particular, called friar Campbell, rendered himself conspicuous for his rudeness in disturbing the last moments of the martyr. "Thou wicked man," said Hamilton, addressing him, "thou knowest that I am not an heretic, and that it is the truth of God for which I now suffer—so much didst thou confess unto me in private—and thereupon I appeal thee to answer before the judgment-seat of Christ." At length the fire was kindled, and, amidst the noise and fury of the flames, he was distinctly heard pronouncing these last words: "How long, O Lord, shall darkness cover this realm? How long wilt thou suffer this tyranny of men? Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."

The martyrdom of this engaging and accomplished youth produced a sensation very different from what his murderers anticipated. They expected by this bold stroke, aimed at a person of such high rank, to intimidate all others, and suppress the rising reformation. The effect was precisely the reverse. It roused the minds of men from the dead sleep into which they had fallen—led them to inquire into the causes of his death—created discussion—and ultimately, what Hamilton had failed to do by his living voice was accomplished by his cruel death.

Knox informs us, that many even in the university of St. Andrews began to “call in doubt what they had before held for a certain verity, and to espy the vanity of the received superstition.” And he relates, in his own homely way, an anecdote which shows how matters stood: “Short after this,” he says, “new consultation was taken that some should be burnit. A merry gentleman, named John Lindesay, familiar (servant) to bishop James Beatoun, standing by when consultation was had, said, ‘My lord, gif ye burn any man, except ye follow my counsell, ye will utterly destroy yourselves. Gif ye will burn them, let them be burned in *how* cellars*; for the reek of Mr. Patrick Hamilton has infected as many as it did blow upon.’”† The impression made by Hamilton’s death on the popular mind was greatly aided by the fearful death of friar Campbell, who had insulted him at the stake. This wretched man soon after went distracted, and died in the utmost horror of mind, with the last appeal of the martyr ringing in his ears.

Notwithstanding all warning and advice, however, the flames of persecution were kindled throughout the

* Hollow, deep.

† Knox, p. 15.

country, and numbers suffered between the years 1528 and 1540. We shall select only two or three instances. The first presents a curious illustration of the impolicy of superstition, and at the same time of the wonderful power of divine grace in qualifying for martyrdom an individual who was as unlikely to suffer, and who as little thought of being called to suffer such a death, as any one who peruses this account. In the history of the French church, we read of an honest country gentleman, who had paid little regard to any form of religion, but who was so pestered and annoyed by the priests with some unfounded suspicions of heresy, that he began first to inquire what heresy was, and from one step to another was led to suffer willingly and intelligently for a religion of which he had formerly known absolutely nothing. The following case is somewhat similar: Mr. David Stratton* was a gentleman of property on the sea-coast of Angus. He was the proprietor of some fishing-boats, out of which the bishop of Murray demanded tithe. Stratton, who was a man of stubborn disposition and rough manners, was so incensed at the increasing pride and covetousness of the clergy, that he ordered his servants to cast every tenth fish they caught into the sea, and sent word to the bishop, that "if he wanted his tithe, he might come and receive it where he got the stock." He was forthwith summoned to answer for heresy. Heresy was a thing he had never dreamt of. He had hitherto been notorious for his contempt of all religion. But now he was led to make inquiry, and happily sought the acquaintance of John Erskine of Dun, afterwards one of the leaders of the refor-

* Stratton was brother to the laird of Lauriston.—*Life of Knox*, i. 354.

mation, from whose conversation he derived singular advantage. At this time, Tyndal's translation of the New Testament had found its way into Scotland, and was privately circulated with great industry. One copy supplied several families. At the silent hour of night they would assemble together in a private house, and having ascertained that there were no spies near them, the sacred volume was brought forth from its concealment, and, while one read, the rest listened with mute attention. One day, Mr. Stratton retired with the young laird of Lauriston to a solitary place in the fields, to hear the New Testament read to him (he was unable to read himself); and it so happened that, in the course of reading, this saying of our Lord occurred, "Whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven."* These words produced the most extraordinary effect on the mind of Stratton; he suddenly became as one enraptured or inspired; and throwing himself on his knees, his hands stretched out, and his eyes fixed for some time stedfastly towards heaven, he burst forth in the following strain: "O Lord, I have been wicked, and justly mayest thou abstract thy grace from me; but, Lord, for thy mercy's sake, let me never deny thee nor thy truth, for fear of death or corporal pains." The issue proved that the prayer had been heard. Being brought before the bishop's court at Holyrood house, he refused to recant, boldly defended the truth, and was sentenced to be hanged and burnt. The execution took place at the rood of Greenside between burgh and Leith, "to the intent," it is said, the inhabitants of Fife, seeing the fire, mi-

* Matt. x. 33.

stricken with terror." He died triumphantly, anticipating a joyful immortality.

The next case we shall notice presents an affecting proof of the triumph of divine grace over constitutional timidity, and the love of life so natural to youth. Alexander Kennedy was a young gentleman of liberal education, residing in Glasgow; he had a turn for Scottish poetry, and at the time we refer to he had not passed the 18th year of his age. He was apprehended along with Jerome Russell, who was of the order of grey friars, and is described by Knox as "a young man of meek nature, quick spirit, and of good letters." Kennedy, on being brought before his judges, and threatened with the dreadful doom of being burnt alive, was at first inclined to recant. In a short time, however, he recovered his composure. The poor lad seemed all at once to have been strengthened from on high; and after having thanked God for having preserved him from apostasy, he rose from his knees: "Now," said he, addressing his judges, "I defy death. Do with me as you please; I thank God *I am ready*." His companion, Russell, though naturally mild, was roused by the irritating language of his persecutors. "This is your hour and power of darkness," he said to them; "now ye sit as judges, and we stand wrongfully accused: but the day will come when our innocence will appear, and ye shall see your own blindness, to your everlasting confusion. Go on, and fill the measure of your iniquity." On their way to the place of execution, Russell, observing some symptoms of depression in the appearance of his youthful fellow-sufferer, thus encouraged him: "Brother, fear not; greater is He that is in us, than he that is in the world. The pain

that we are to suffer is short, and shall be light, but our joy and consolation shall never have an end. Let us, therefore, strive to enter in to our master and saviour by the same strait way which he has trod before us. Death cannot destroy us, for it is already destroyed by Him for whose sake we suffer." And so both of them, after kneeling down and praying, cheerfully yielded themselves to the executioners—they were fastened to the stake—the faggots were lighted—and their spirits ascended, as it were in a chariot of fire, to the realms of everlasting glory.

The next story is of a more harrowing description. It is that of a female, the wife of one Robert Lamb, at Perth, who suffered at the same time with her husband. Lamb's crime was, that he had interrupted a friar who was preaching that a man could not be saved without praying to the saints; and the only charge against his wife was, that she refused to pray to the Virgin Mary when in child-birth, declaring that she would only pray to God in the name of Jesus Christ. For these crimes Lamb was condemned to be hanged, and his wife to be tied in a sack and drowned. The circumstances attending the last scene of this poor woman's life were sufficient to have moved any heart but that of a popish inquisitor. Warmly attached to her husband, she implored, as a last and only favour, that she might be allowed to die in his company. This affecting request was barbarously refused; but she was allowed to accompany him to the place of his execution. On the way, she exhorted him to patience and constancy in the cause of Christ; and on parting with him, she said: "Husband, be glad; we have lived together many joyful days; and this

day on which we must die we ought to esteem the most joyful of all, because now we shall have joy for ever. Therefore, I will not bid you good night, for we shall meet in the kingdom of heaven." After witnessing his death, she was ordered to prepare for her own, and was taken for that purpose to a pool of water in the neighbourhood. Here the tenderness of the mother began to manifest itself. She implored her neighbours to be kind to her fatherless and motherless children; and, with a look of anguish, she took from her bosom the infant she was suckling, and committed it to a nurse whom she had provided. Yet all this did not shake her fortitude or her faith; she rose superior to her sufferings, and calmly resigned herself to death.

On hearing of the courage and constancy of these early martyrs of the reformation, one cannot fail to admire the power of faith in the glorious gospel of Christ—that faith under the strengthening influences of which, in more ancient times, even "women endured torture, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection." The mental heroism of these sufferers closely resembles that of the primitive martyrs of Christianity, and far excels the most splendid and admired examples of courage recorded in Roman history. The conduct of the wife of poor Robert Lamb may remind some of the noble matron of Rome, the wife of *Pœtus*, who, when condemned to die with her husband, plunged the dagger first into her own bosom, and then, handing it to her husband, said with a smile, "*Pœtus*, it is not painful." We see in both the same noble contempt of death; but, when more narrowly

examined, how different do the cases appear! Putting out of view the vast difference between the causes in which they suffered, the Roman lady was obliged to die; she could not have escaped by making any concessions. The Scottish mother might have saved her life by saying a few words, such as "Hail Mary, queen of heaven!" Hers was a voluntary sacrifice on the altar of faith and a good conscience.

Our admiration of the power of divine grace in these worthies must increase, when we consider that, at this time, the number of the reformed was comparatively very small—that the sufferers met with little sympathy from their neighbours—and that there was, as yet, no public preaching of the gospel in Scotland, so that it could only be from reading the scriptures that any acquired the knowledge of the truth; and yet, in spite of these disadvantages, a single ray of that truth, darting from a single text, was sufficient to open their eyes, and, in the faith and hope of the gospel, they would cheerfully submit to death in the most frightful forms.

It is true that the victims of popish cruelty in Scotland were few when compared with those who suffered in other countries; but no thanks to popery for that! What our ancestors endured was merely a sample of the bloody tragedy which it was now enacting in almost every nation in Europe. Thanks, rather, under providence, to the stout hearts and stalwart arms of our reformers, who arrested its sanguinary career soon after its commencement, braved its power even on the throne, and never ceased till they had proscribed it by the laws of the land.

We may be told by some that all the cruelties of

which we have been speaking are to be traced to the barbarism of the age, and to ignorance of the principles of liberty, which, they say, were not understood even by protestants for many years afterwards. This, however, is a mere theory, unsupported by facts—the language of persons who are fond of reducing everything to general principles. Protestantism disavows, by the very right of protest which it claims for itself, the right of persecuting others for conscience' sake. But popery, like every form of superstition, is, in its very essence and spirit, a system of intolerance. It aims at universal dominion; it denies the right of private judgment in matters of religion; it lays the conscience and understanding of every man at the feet of his priest; and, when it has once taken possession of his mind, it hardens the heart, and fits it for perpetrating atrocities which human nature, undebased by its influence, shudders to hear of, and shrinks from beholding. Our ancestors knew it better than we do; and it was one of their articles of indictment against it, which shows that they had feelings which were shocked, and a sense of human rights which was outraged by it—that it was “a cruel, bloody, and tyrannical superstition.”

How thankful ought we to feel to a kind and ill-requited providence, that we have been delivered from such a system of oppression—that we are not called to suffer as our forefathers were, for professing the gospel of Jesus Christ—that we are permitted to enjoy, in unmolested peace, our religious privileges! If David would not drink of the water of Bethlehem, because it was in his eyes “the blood of the men that went in jeopardy of their lives,” but

“poured it out unto the Lord,” how dearly ought we to prize, and how devoutly ought we to improve, to the glory of God, privileges which have been transmitted to us at the expense of the blood of His dear saints!

CHAPTER II.

The last martyrs of the reformation—George Wishart—Walter Mill—Commencement of the reformation—Scotland reformed by her nobles and people—Arrival of John Knox—Demolition of the monasteries.

IN 1539, James Beaton, archbishop of St. Andrews, the murderer of Patrick Hamilton, died, and was succeeded in the primacy by his nephew, cardinal David Beaton. This prelate inherited all his uncle's hostility to the reformed doctrine, with even a larger share of his ambition, craft, and cruelty. When James V. died of a broken heart, he forged a will in the name of the deceased monarch, appointing himself governor of the kingdom; and had this policy succeeded, there can be little doubt that he might have arrested, to an indefinite period, the progress of the reformation in Scotland. Some idea may be formed of the wholesale measures which this bloody-minded man had devised for the extirpation of protestantism, as well as of the numbers of the reformed at this period, when it is stated, that before the death of the king, the cardinal had presented him with a list of *three hundred and sixty* of the chief of the nobility and barons, with the earl of Arran at their head, who were suspected of heresy, and doomed to

destruction.* A merciful providence interfered to defeat this atrocious plot. The forgery was discovered; and Arran, who was friendly to the reformation, was elected governor of the kingdom.

Baffled in his bloody and ambitious designs, Beaton retreated, like a chafed tiger, to his castle at St. Andrews, and, taking the law into his own hand, he sacrificed to his vengeance all the protestants who came within his reach. But the special object of his hatred was Mr. George Wishart, a reformed minister, and brother to the laird of Pitarrow. All the accounts of this martyr transmitted to us, unite in representing him as a person of the most amiable and venerable character. He is described as a tall man of dark complexion, graceful in his person, and courteous in his manners, of profound learning, and remarkable for humility and charity. His piety was so fervent, that he used to spend whole days and nights in prayer and meditation. As a preacher, he had a wonderful command over the feelings of his audience, and many were converted under his ministry. Wishart's popularity, however, was gall and wormwood to those of the Romish clergy who were still attached to their superstition, and especially to Beaton, who tried various plans, for some time unsuccessfully, to get him dragged or decoyed into his den. Hearing of his success in Ayr, the cardinal sent the bishop of Glasgow to apprehend him. The bishop, whom Knox calls "a glorious fule," † found the preacher surrounded by so many gentlemen, that he durst not execute his commission; but he took possession of the church; and the gentlemen having threatened to expel him by force, "Let him alone,"

* Crawford's Lives, p. 79.

† A vain-glorious fool.

said Wishart, who could not endure violence of any kind, "his sermon will not do mekill hurt; let us go to the mercat cross." The bishop's sermon, according to Knox's account, was a very harmless one indeed. "He preached to his jackmen, and to some auld boisses * of the town: the sum of all his sermon was, They say we sould preach; why not? Better late thrive than never thrive. Haud us still for your bishop, and we sall provide better the next time." †

In Wishart's character, piety was beautifully blended with benevolence. He was so liberal to the poor, that he parted not only with his money, but even with his body-clothes, to supply their necessities. The town of Dundee, which was the first of the Scottish burghs that embraced the reformation, having been visited with a severe plague in 1544, he no sooner heard of it, than he hastened to the scene of death with as much earnestness as others were flying from it. "They are now in trouble, and need comfort," he said; "and perchance the hand of God will make them now to magnify and reverence that word which before, for fear of men, they set at light part." He was received with great joy by the inhabitants; sermon was intimated for the very next day; and as the plague was still raging in the place, he took his station upon the head of the east gate, the infected standing without the gate, and those that were free within; and there he preached to them on these appropriate words in the 107th psalm, "He sent his word and healed them;" adding, by way of paraphrase, "It is neither herb nor plaister, O Lord, but thy word heals all." "By the which sermon," says Knox, "he raised up the hearts of all that heard him, that they regardit not

* Old Topers.

† Knox's Hist., p. 44.

death, but judgit thame mair happie that sould depairt, than sic as sould remain behind." His concern for the bodies of his fellow-men was not less distinguished than his love to their souls. When not preaching, he was constantly employed in visiting the sick, and ministering to the wants of the poor; exposing himself, without fear, to the risk of infection.

But, in truth, the life of Wishart was in greater danger from his persecutors than from the pestilence. One day, as he was descending from his elevated position on the gate after sermon, he observed a man standing at the foot of the stairs, and immediately suspecting his purpose, he laid hold of his hand, saying, "My friend, what would you do?" taking from him, at the same time, a dagger, which he held concealed under his gown. The wretch was so confounded, that he confessed on the spot that he was a priest, who had been bribed by cardinal Beaton to assassinate Wishart. The people, on hearing this, would have torn him to pieces, but the good minister took the assassin in his arms, and saved his life. "No," said he, "he has done me no harm, but rather good; he has let us understand what we may fear; in times to come we will watch better."

The singular promptitude and penetration displayed by Wishart on this occasion may be explained on ordinary principles. Knox himself tells us that he marked the priest, "because he was maist scharp of eye and judgement." But the following incident, which occurred soon after, is not so easily explained. When at Montrose, he received a letter, purporting to come from an intimato friend who had been taken suddenly ill, and was anxious to see him before his

death. Wishart set out in the company of a few friends, but had not proceeded above a quarter of a mile when he suddenly stopped, and said to them, "I am forbidden of God to go this journey; will some of you be pleased to ride to yonder place, (pointing to a little hill) and see what you find, for I apprehend there is a plot laid against my life." They went to the hill and discovered some sixty horsemen concealed behind it, ready to intercept him. It turned out that the letter was a forgery of the cardinal's, and Wishart once more escaped; but, with a presentiment soon after verified, he said to his friends on their return, "I know I shall end my life in the hands of that blood-thirsty man; but it will not be after this manner." "I know assuredly my travel is nigh an end," he said on another occasion, with something like the spirit of ancient prophecy, "but God will send you comfort after me. This realm shall be illuminated with the light of Christ's gospel, as clearly as any realm ever was since the days of the apostles; the house of God shall be built in it; yea, it shall not lack (whatsoever enemies shall devise to the contrary) the very copestone. Neither shall this be long in doing; for there shall not many suffer after me."

Shortly after this, Wishart was basely betrayed into the hands of the cardinal by the earl of Bothwell, under a pledge of personal safety. He was conducted to St. Andrews, and after a mock trial, during which he was grossly insulted, mocked at, and even spit upon, by his judges, he was condemned to the stake as an obstinate heretic. The crimes of which he was accused were, such as denying auricular confession, purgatory, the mass, and other inventions of

the Romish church; and he defended himself with great meekness and fidelity. Of one real heresy only did his enemies accuse him, namely, of holding that the souls of men slept, after death, till the resurrection; and of this he was so anxious to clear himself, that he formally disclaimed it at the stake. So determined was Beaton on accomplishing his object, that though Arran, the governor, wrote to him to delay the trial, declaring that "he would not consent to his death until the cause was well examined, and protesting, that if the cardinal should do otherwise, the man's blood should be required at his hands," the haughty prelate, setting all authority at defiance, and without waiting for the sanction of the civil power, proceeded to carry the sentence into effect at his own hand. On the day of execution, the guns of the castle were planted so as to command the street and the scaffold, in case of any attempt to rescue the prisoner; and the front tower of the palace was elegantly fitted up with cushions and tapestry, that there, seated at their ease, the cardinal and his clergy might enjoy the spectacle. That morning the devoted minister was invited to breakfast with the governor of the castle. He replied, "Very willingly, and so much the rather that I perceive you to be a good Christian, and a man fearing God." Bread and wine having been set upon the table, he said, "I beseech you, in the name of God, and for the love you bear to our saviour, Jesus Christ, to be silent a little while, till I have made a short exhortation, and blessed this bread, so that I may bid you farewell." He then spoke about half-an-hour on the institution of the supper, and the death of Christ; after which, he blessed the bread and wine, and having

tasted them himself, distributed them to the governor and his friends. "As for myself," he concluded, "there is a more bitter potion prepared for me, only because I have preached the true doctrine of Christ; but pray for me that I may take it patiently as from his hand." He was then brought out, and fixed to the stake with a heavy chain. The fire was lighted, and the powder fastened to his body exploded. "This flame hath scorched my body," said the sufferer, "yet hath it not daunted my spirit. But he who from yonder high place beholdeth us with such pride, shall, within a few days, lie in the same as ignominiously as now he is seen proudly to rest himself." The fire having now been kindled, he was first strangled, and his body was soon consumed to ashes.*

This happened on the 1st day of March 1546. Nothing could be more unlikely, at the time Wishart uttered this memorable prediction, than that it should be fulfilled. The cardinal himself paid no regard to it; he dwelt securely in his fortified castle; the people of the town were at his command; and he had powerful friends throughout the country. A late writer is so perfectly sure that our ancestors could, in no instance, receive premonitions of future events, that he maintains it to be "more probable" that Wishart was privy to some conspiracy against the cardinal, "than that he should be endowed with the spirit of prophecy."† But is there anything inconsistent with reason or religion in supposing that God may, on special occasions, such as in times of hot persecution, have granted to his faithful and prayerful servants impressions and forewarnings of coming

* Spotswoode, pp. 79, 82; Pitscottie, p. 457; Knox, p. 53.

† M'Gavin's edition of Scots Worthies, i. 37.

events, beyond what could be discovered even by "an extraordinary degree of sagacious foresight?" "That the Supreme Being," says Dr. Cook, "may, in seasons of difficulty, thus enlighten his servants, cannot be doubted." To hold that this opinion is inconsistent with the perfection of the holy scriptures, is to mistake the matter entirely. Our worthies never pretended to be endowed with the spirit of prophecy, in the sense in which this is true of the ancient prophets; they did not lay claim to inspiration, nor require implicit faith to be placed in their sayings as divine; they did not propose them as rules of duty, nor appeal to them as miraculous evidences of the doctrines they taught. But they regarded such presentiments as gracious intimations of the will of God, granted to them in answer to prayer, for their own encouragement or direction; and they delivered them as warnings to others, leaving the truth of them to be ascertained and proved by the event.

To insinuate, as some have done, that Wishart—the meek, the unworldly, the beneficent, the tender-hearted and pious Wishart, who repeatedly interceded for the life of his enemies, prayed for their forgiveness at the stake, and kissed the executioner before he did his office—was "privy to the conspiracy" afterwards formed against Beaton, is the strangest exhibition of prejudice which modern times afford. The charge has been revived of late, in a more malignant spirit, by some writers whose sympathies seem to be all in favour of the popish clergy, and with whom, in estimating the justness of the accusation, it is apparently enough to know that Beaton was a bishop, and Wishart a reformer. Some idea may be formed of the credulity, if not the charity, of these

gentlemen, when we mention that the whole evidence on which they proceed is a passage in some manuscript correspondence of the period, in which mention is made of "a Scottishman called Wyshert," who, it seems, had been employed as a sort of go-between, or confidential servant, in some conspiracy formed by Henry VIII. against the life of the cardinal! After what we have stated of the character of Wishart, our readers may be safely left to judge whether *he* was likely to be the person employed on this menial and degrading service, or whether, knowing that such a conspiracy had been formed, he was a man capable of telling it at such an awful moment, for the purpose of being accounted a prophet; as if, after the manner of modern fortune-tellers, he had first acted as a spy, and then pretended to predict what he had discovered! In the hands of writers actuated by such a spirit, or guided by such evidence, no man's character can be safe, and no man's memory can be sacred. But "the memory of the just is blessed;" and it is consoling to think that, in this case, as in many others of a similar kind, providence has preserved materials sufficient to vindicate the character of the reformer, and make the odious charge recoil on the heads of his accusers.*

* See an able and triumphant "Vindication of George Wishart the martyr, against Mr. Patrick Fraser Tytler," which appeared in the *Edinburgh Christian Monitor* for 1823, vol. iii. p. 475, where the author shows the absurdity of supposing that a gentleman of Mr. Wishart's rank and character, the brother of a Scottish baron, would be designated by his friends "a Scottishman called Wyshert," and proves by direct historical testimony, that this person could neither be the martyr nor his brother the laird of Pitarrow. Mr. Tytler attempted a reply in the same periodical (iv. 90), in which, however, he does not venture to repeat his charge against Wishart, or to answer the arguments of his critic. More recently the charge has been revived by the Rev. C. J. Lyon

The truth is, that the plot which had been concerted against the cardinal by Henry VIII. had completely failed, and his assassination was the result of a more private conspiracy which was formed some time after Wishart's death. This conspiracy, as we are informed by our historians, was first proposed by a hot-headed young man of the house of Rothes, named Norman Lesley, who was instigated by some personal pique against Beaton, and was heard to swear that "these two" (holding out his hand and dagger) "were the two priests that would give absolution to the cardinal."* With him were associated his brother, John Lesley, William Kirkaldy of Grange, James Melville of Carnbee, and some others, not exceeding twelve persons in all. Early on the morning of Saturday, 29th May 1546, this small band surprised the castle of St. Andrews, turned out the attendants, burst into the chamber of the cardinal, and after upbraiding him with his perfidy and cruelty, fell upon him with their swords. He died exclaiming, "I am a priest—fy, fy—all is gone!" The inhabitants of the town, awakened by the terrified inmates of the castle, ran to the palace, eagerly demanding a sight of the cardinal; and the conspirators, in order to satisfy them, exposed his dead body

of St. Andrews, who has been satisfactorily answered by the Rev. W. Lothian of the same place. In his History of Scotland, Mr. Tytler does not venture to repeat the charge as to Wishart's share in the conspiracy, though he still insinuates that, from his connection with the conspirators against Beaton, he must have known of it; it is just *possible* that he might not! (Vol. v. 417.) This is pure conjecture. And to attempt fixing such a serious charge on the memory of this venerated martyr of the reformation, merely on conjecture, without adducing a single proof of his implication in the plot, is altogether unworthy of the dignity of history—to say nothing of its impartiality.

* Buchanan, b. 15; Spotswoode, p. 82; Pitscottie, p. 483.

on the **very** tower from which he had, a few months before, in savage pomp, witnessed the execution of George Wishart.

Far be it from us to vindicate this act of bloody revenge. The rude and unsettled state of the times, and the arbitrary violence of Beaton, who had set the example of acting in defiance of all law in the murder of Wishart, may palliate the irregularity, but cannot excuse the atrocity of the deed.* Viewed as an event in providence, we may recognise in it a just judgment from God on a cruel persecutor; while, at the same time, considered as the deed of man, we condemn the instruments whose passions were overruled for accomplishing it. Beaton died unlamented, as he had lived undesired; and the general feeling as to the manner of his death was expressed in the following couplet of Sir David Lyndsay:—†

“As for the cardinal, I grant
He was the man we weel could want,
And we’ll forget him soon;
And yet I think the sooth to say,
Although the loon is weel away,
The deed was foully done.”

The martyrdom of Wishart did not arrest the progress of the reformation, nor did the fate of Beaton

* The History of England records instances of the murder of bishops, much more numerous and more revolting than any similar cases in Scotland. The murder of Becket, archbishop of Canterbury, in the twelfth century, by four English barons—that of Sudbury, archbishop of York, in the next century, by Wat Tyler’s mob—of Walcher, bishop of Durham—Ayscoth, bishop of Salisbury, and others, who fell victims to their own ambition, oppression, and illegal practices, might be cited to show that the assassination of Beaton is not without its parallels in prelatic England; not to speak of the cold-blooded judicial murders of archbishop Cranmer, and bishops Latimer, Ridley, and Hooper.

† The Scottish poet, whose ingenious satirical poems contributed greatly to the downfall of the Romish clergy.

stop the fury of persecution. New preachers, many of whom had fled from England on the accession of "bloody Mary," supplied the place of those who had been put to death, and converts, both from among the clergy and laity, were daily added to the reformed faith. The inhabitants of Edinburgh, almost in a body, resolved no longer to attend mass, but to make an open separation from the church of Rome, an example which was followed by many others in town and country. In vain did the queen, the widow of James V., who was now regent of the kingdom, try to stem the torrent. The clergy sunk every day in public estimation, and various causes contributed to accelerate their downfall. Instead of setting themselves to reform the notorious abuses of the Church, they made an ostentatious display of the most puerile of her ceremonies; instead of prudently bending to circumstances, they rose to a higher pitch of arrogance than ever. The very year of Wishart's martyrdom, cardinal Beaton and the archbishop of Glasgow had a mortal quarrel in that city, the point of dispute being which of their crosses should be carried foremost in a procession. The cross-bearers happening to meet, a scuffle ensued, and they pummeled each other with their crosses, till both were thrown to the ground. Some time after, a momentous controversy arose about the propriety of saying the *pater-noster* to the saints. A monk, called friar Totts, in a sermon preached in St. Andrews, at the request of some doctors in the university, engaged to prove that all the petitions in the Lord's prayer might, with great propriety, be addressed to the saints. "If we meet with an old man in the streets," said he, "we will say, Good morrow,

father; how much more may we call the saints, *Our fathers!* And seeing we grant they are in heaven, we may say to every one of them, *Our father which art in heaven,*" &c. This stuff might have gone down a few years before, but the temper of the times had changed; the audience could not refrain from laughter, and the preacher was obliged to leave the town, glad to escape from the persecution of the boys, who cried after him on the street, "*Friar Paternoster!*" A scene of a different kind occurred in the metropolis. St. Giles, it seems, was the patron saint of Edinburgh, and on his feast-day it was the custom to parade his image through the town, with drums, trumpets, and all sorts of musical instruments. When this day arrived in 1558 (just two years before the reformation), the clergy resolved to have it observed with all due solemnity, and the queen, fearing a tumult, agreed to honour the scene with her presence. But, lo! when the hour of procession arrived, the saint was missing; some evil-disposed person had stolen him out of the receptacle in which he was usually kept. This occasioned some delay, till another image, of smaller dimensions, was borrowed from the Greyfriars, which the people, in derision, called "*Young Sanct Geill.*" All now went forward peaceably, till the queen retired to dinner, when some young fellows, provided for the purpose, came forward and offered to assist the bearers of the image. "*Young Sanct Geill*" was soon jostled off into the street and smashed in pieces. The result was an Edinburgh riot—no jest at any time; and the priests were glad to save themselves by a hasty flight. Down went the crosses; off went the surplices, caps and coronets. "*Such an uproar,*" says Knox, "*came*

never among the generation of antichrist in this realm before!"*

There was only one thing needed to seal the ruin of the popish clergy in Scotland—the continuance of the cruelties by which they endeavoured to put down the opposition they had raised. And, like those beasts of prey whose dying struggles are more formidable than their first attack, popery expended the last efforts of its expiring power in a deed of transcendent cruelty. Walter Mill, an old decrepid priest, who had been condemned as a heretic in the time of cardinal Beaton, but had escaped, was at last discovered by the spies of his successor, archbishop Hamilton, and brought to St. Andrews for trial. He appeared before the court so worn out with age and hardships, that it was not expected he would be able to answer the questions put to him; but, to the surprise of all, he managed his defence with great spirit. He was condemned to the flames; but such was the horror now felt at this punishment, and such the general conviction of the innocence of the victim, that the clergy could not prevail on a secular judge to ratify the sentence, nor an individual in the town so much as to give or sell a rope to bind the martyr to the stake, so that the archbishop had to furnish them with a cord from his own pavilion. When commanded by Oliphant, the bishop's menial, to go to the stake, the old man, with becoming spirit, refused. "No," said he, "I will not go, except thou put me up with thy hand; for I am forbidden by the law of God to put hands on myself." The wretch having pushed him forward, he went up with a cheer-

* Knox, p. 95; Spotswoode, p. 118; Row's MS. Hist.

ful countenance, saying, "I will go unto the altar of God." "As for me," he added, when tied to the stake, his voice trembling with age, "I am fourscore years old, and cannot live long by course of nature; but a hundred better shall rise out of the ashes of my bones. I trust in God I shall be the last that shall suffer death in Scotland for this cause." So saying, he expired amidst the flames, on the 28th August 1558. He was indeed the last who suffered in that cause; and, as Spotswoode observes, his death was the death of popery in this realm. This execution roused the horror of the nation to an incredible pitch. The citizens of St. Andrews marked the spot on which the martyr died, by rearing over it an immense heap of stones; and as often as the priests caused it to be removed, the sullen and ominous memorial was restored by the next morning. The knell of popery had rung; and Scotland was prepared to start up as one man, and shake itself free of the monster which had, for so many centuries, prostrated its strength, and preyed upon its vitals.

As a final resource to support their sinking credit, the priests contrived once more to get up a miracle, the last they attempted in Scotland. Public notice was given, that on a certain day, at the chapel of our Lady of Loretto, near Musselburgh, they intended to put the truth of their religion to the test, by curing a young man who had been born blind. A great multitude collected to witness the miracle; and there, sure enough, was the young man, apparently stone blind, accompanied by a procession of monks, who, after solemnly invoking the assistance of the Virgin, made him open his eyes, to the astonishment

of the beholders. But among the crowd there was one Colville of Cleish, a brave gentleman and a good protestant, who immediately suspected the trick. He took the young man home to his lodgings, and locking the door, prevailed upon him, partly by threats and partly by promises, to reveal the whole secret. It appeared that while in the service of the nuns of Sciennes, near Edinburgh, the boy had acquired the faculty of turning up the white of his eyes, and keeping them in that position so as to appear blind. The monks having come to the knowledge of this, thought of turning it to some account, and having kept him for some years concealed, so as not to be easily recognised by his old acquaintances, they had first sent him out to beg as a blind pauper, and now produced him to act his part on the occasion referred to. To confirm his narrative, the lad "played his paivie" before Colville, by "flypping up the lid of his eyes, and casting up the white," to perfection. Upon this, Colville exposed the whole story, and made the young man repeat his exhibition at the cross of Edinburgh, to the confusion of the whole fraternity of monks and friars, who would, no doubt, have wreaked their vengeance on their former tool, and made him blind enough, had not Cleish stood beside him with his drawn sword, while he made his confession, and placing him, when he had done, on his own horse, carried him off to Fife.*

It is a great mistake to suppose that the Scottish reformation originated with the common people, or in the spirit of rebellion. It would be much nearer

* Row's Hist. MS., p. 356; Life of Knox, i. 321.

the truth to say that Scotland was reformed by her noblemen and gentlemen. At both the periods of her reformation, the flower of her nobility took the lead; her principal reformers were men of superior education as well as high rank; and many of the first protestant preachers were converted ecclesiastics, who continued to officiate in the church, after having abandoned the mummeries of popery, and become genuine pastors of Christ's flock. And though, unfortunately, the crown was unfavourable to the reformation, it was not until every other method had been tried, and tried ineffectually, that the protestant noblemen and gentry found it necessary to bind themselves by solemn oaths for mutual defence, and to hazard their lives in the cause of religion.

The first *band* of this description was formed in December 1557, and was subscribed by the leading nobles and gentlemen of the land. The demands of these reformers were at first exceedingly few and simple; but it is remarkable that, among these, even at this early stage of the reformation, the most prominent place was given to the popular election of ministers. They requested "that public prayers, and the administration of the sacraments, should be celebrated by ministers in their mother-tongue, that all the people might understand them; that the election of ministers, *according to the custom of the primitive Church, should be made by the people*; and that they who presided over that election should inquire diligently into the lives and doctrines of all that were to be admitted."* The principal persons

* Spotswoode, p. 169; Knox, p. 120.

among the nobility and landed gentry, "into whose hearts the Lord God of our fathers did put such a thing as this, to beautify the house of the Lord," and whose names deserve to be held by all Scotsmen in everlasting remembrance, were—Archibald Earl of Argyle; Lord James Stewart, afterwards Earl of Murray, and commonly called the Good Regent, the Earl of Glencairne, the Earl of Morton, the Earl of Rothes, Archibald Lord of Lorne, Lords Ochiltree, Yester, and Boyd; Sir James Sandilands of Calder, John Erskine of Dun, and a large proportion of the lesser barons. The feudal system, which then prevailed in Scotland, gave these noblemen and gentlemen the virtual command of the whole community; they reigned on their estates like so many princes. These were not the men, when once enlightened by the truth, tamely to submit to priestly domination. They had long been disgusted by the manners of the higher clergy, who, though in general mean or base-born persons, had claimed precedence of the ancient nobility, thrust themselves into places of power, and appropriated to themselves the greater share of the national wealth. On the other hand, they saw that the reformed preachers, who were in general the sons or relatives of persons of rank, were men of principle and self-denial, mainly bent on the promotion of the spiritual interests of their countrymen. For some time they contented themselves with protecting these good men from the vengeance of the prelates; and providing, by an act of council, that "it should be lawful for every one that could read, to use the English version of the Bible, until the prelates should publish a more correct one,"—an act which, by giving "free course to the word of

the Lord," had great influence in promoting the reformation.

Hamilton, archbishop of St. Andrews, hearing that Argyle kept one of those ministers, Mr. John Douglas, in his castle as his chaplain, sent the earl a coaxing letter, in which, after declaring he felt "bound in conscience" to inquire into this matter, and representing the danger to which he exposed himself and his honourable family, by defection from the church, he exhorted his lordship to rid himself, "in some honest fashion," of Douglas, that perjured apostate who had seduced him, offering to provide him with a learned preacher, who, he would "lay his soul in pawn," would teach him no other than true doctrine. The earl's answer is respectful but spirited, and contains some shrewd hints which the archbishop could not fail to apply to himself: "Your lordship declares that there are delations of sundry points of heresy, upon that man called Douglas. I have heard him teach no articles of heresy, but that which agrees with God's word. Your lordship regards your conscience; I pray God that ye do so, and examine your conscience weill. He preaches against idolatrie; I remit to your lordship's conscience gif that be heresie or not. He preaches against adulterie and fornicatioun; I refer that to your lordship's conscience. He preaches against hypocrisie; I refer that to your lordship's conscience. He preaches against all manner of abuses of Christ's sincere religion; I refer that to your lordship's conscience. My lord, I exhort you, in Christ's name, to weigh all these affairs in your conscience, and consider if it be your dutie, not only to thole this, but in like manner to do the same. Your lordship

says you would take the labour to get me a man to instruct me in your catholick faith. God Almighty send us mony of that sort, that will preache trewly, and naething but ane catholick universal Christian faith; for we Hieland rude people has *mister of them* (much need of them). And if your lordship wald get me sic a man, I sould provide him a corporal living, with great thanks to your lordship. And because I am able to sustean more than ane of them, I will request your lordship to provyde me as many as ye can; for *the harvest is grit, and the labouraris are few.*"

We beg to make a remark here, once for all, on the style of these extracts and anecdotes. Since the introduction of the English dialect into our country, the Scottish has been disused by almost all except the humbler classes of society, and hence has become associated in some minds with rudeness and vulgarity. But at the present era of our history, and for many years after, the language of the court, the bench, and the pulpit, of our kings and queens, and the finest ladies and gentlemen of the day, though differing materially in its pronunciation from the coarse dialect or *patois* which now prevails, was universally Scottish. This very obvious statement seems called for, when we find such sentiments as those we have now given actually stigmatized as "vulgar scurrility!" There can be no question that much of the disgust which some profess to feel at the sayings of our worthy ancestors, may be traced to the mere circumstance that their thoughts and feelings, truly noble and refined as they were in themselves, and as they might have appeared in an English dress,

were unfortunately uttered in their own mother-tongue.

But to proceed. The nobility and gentry resolved to do everything in their power to suppress idolatry, and advance "the preaching of the evangel," as they well termed the reformation; and yet, anxious to proceed in the most orderly manner, presented supplications to the queen regent, humbly craving the reform of some of the most glaring abuses of the church. The queen, however, who was a determined papist, a Frenchwoman, and acting under foreign influence, instead of listening to these petitions, had concerted with the bishops to summon the reformed ministers to Edinburgh; and, in order to get the gentry out of the way, had issued an order for them to march to the border. The gentlemen of the west, on their way through Edinburgh, discovered the plot, and were so indignant, that they went resolutely in a body to the palace, entered the queen's chamber, where they found her surrounded with her priests, and bitterly complained of the deception. Her majesty attempted to soothe them with fair speeches; but Chalmers of Gathgirth, a gruff old baron, who was very zealous in the cause, cut her short by saying, "Madam, we know that this is the malicious device of these jaivels (the bishops), and of that bastard (Hamilton, the archbishop) that standeth by you; but we vow to God we shall make a day of it! They oppress us and our tenants, to feed their idle bellies; they trouble our preachers, and would murder them and us! Shall we suffer this any longer? No, madam, it shall not be!" So saying, he clapt on his steel bonnet, and the rest of the gentlemen followed his example. Alarmed

for the bodily safety of the bishops, who were trembling from head to foot, the queen interfered, and sent the unceremonious gentlemen away, with fair promises of protection to the ministers.

These promises were not long kept. The queen, after dissembling a while with the reformers, at length threw off the mask, and avowed her determination to suppress the reformation by force. It is often seen that, on the eve of some great deliverance to the church, her enemies are permitted, before their final overthrow, to gain a temporary advantage; and so it was now. The queen's brothers, the princes of Lorraine, who were the most ambitious of men, and the most bigoted of papists, had formed a gigantic conspiracy for dethroning Elizabeth, and recovering England and Scotland to the dominion of Rome. For this purpose it was deemed necessary to despatch French troops into our country, to subdue the refractory Scots, and extinguish the heresy which had sprung up among them. Our fathers, it may be easily supposed, viewed these foreign allies with no small jealousy. The lords and gentlemen, taking the alarm, began to prepare for self-defence; but not till they had used every expedient, without success, to prevent matters from coming to an extremity. The queen declared that, "in spite of them, all their preachers should be banished from Scotland, though they should preach as well as St. Paul;" and when reminded of her former promises, she replied, that "it became not subjects to burden their princes with promises, further than they pleased to keep them." A proclamation was issued, prohibiting any person from preaching without authority from the bishops; and on hearing that this proclamation was disregarded-

ed, she summoned four of the preachers, Paul Methven, John Christison, William Harlow, and John Willock, to stand trial at the justiciary court of Stirling, for usurping the ministerial office, and exciting sedition among the people. The trial was appointed to take place on the of 10th May, 1559.

Such was the critical state of affairs, when an individual suddenly appeared on the stage, the report of whose arrival in Scotland spread a panic among the popish clergy from which they never recovered, and who was destined to do more for the cause of the reformation than all the nobles of Scotland, with their armed followers, could have effected;—need I say, that individual was John Knox?

As the life of this reformer forms the subject of a work with which many of the readers of these pages may be familiar, we need not dwell on his previous history. Suffice it to say, that John Knox was born at Gifford, a village near Haddington, in the year 1505; that he was a fellow-student of the famous George Buchanan, who was classical tutor to James VI., and one of the most learned men of his age; and that it was not long before both Buchanan and Knox embraced the reformed religion, with all the ardour of youth, and all the firmness of strong and cultivated minds. Knox had formed a strong attachment to George Wishart, and waited constantly on his person, bearing the two-handed sword which was carried before him, from the time that the attempt was made to assassinate him at Dundee. When Wishart was apprehended, Knox insisted for liberty to accompany him;

but the martyr dismissed him with this reply, "Nay, return to your bairns (meaning his pupils), and God bless you; *ane is sufficient for a sacrifice.*" After the assassination of Beaton, he retreated for safety to the castle of St. Andrews, which was then held by the conspirators. Knox had, before his conversion, entered into priest's orders; and while he remained in the castle, he was unexpectedly called upon to officiate to the Protestants who had there sought refuge. But the castle having surrendered, he was sent, with other prisoners, to the galleys. Upon regaining his liberty, he repaired to England, where he remained till the death of that good prince, Edward VI., when the fires of persecution, kindled by the bloody Mary, compelled him to flee to Geneva, and he accepted the charge of the English congregation in that city. But during all his wanderings, his heart was fixed on his native country. With the friends of the reformation there he kept up a constant correspondence; and he at last resolved to devote himself, at all hazards, to the work of emancipating Scotland from the darkness and thralldom of popery. He arrived, as we have already seen, at a period when his presence was much required, and at a crisis for which his character was admirably adapted. Possessing firm and high-toned principle, the foundations of which were deeply laid in sincere piety and profound acquaintance with the scriptures; endowed with talents of no common order, and an eloquence popular and overwhelming; ardent in his feelings, indefatigable in his exertions, daring and dauntless in his resolutions, John Knox was the man, and almost the only man of his time, who seemed to be expressly designed by the hand

of Providence for achieving the lofty and adventurous enterprise to which he now consecrated himself, spirit, and soul, and body.

His arrival in Scotland was not long concealed from the clergy. On the morning after he landed at Leith, a person came to the monastery of the greyfriars, where the provincial council was sitting, with the information that John Knox was come from France, and had slept the last night in Edinburgh. The priests were panic-struck with the intelligence, the council was dismissed in confusion, a messenger was despatched to the queen, and within a few days Knox was proclaimed an outlaw and a rebel. Undismayed by this sentence, he did not hesitate a moment on the course he should pursue. He determined to present himself voluntarily at Stirling, where the protestant ministers had been summoned to stand their trial. Having remained only a single day in Edinburgh, he hurried to Dundee, where he found the principal protestants already assembled, with the intention of accompanying their ministers to the place of trial, and avowing their adherence to the doctrines for which they were accused. Accompanying them to Perth, Knox preached a sermon in that town, in which he exposed the idolatry of the mass and image-worship. The audience had peaceably dismissed, when one of the priests, as if in contempt of the doctrine just delivered, began to celebrate mass. A boy uttered some mark of disapprobation, and was struck by the priest; the boy retaliated by throwing a stone at his aggressor, which happened to break one of the images. This, in the excited state of the public mind, operated as a signal to some of the people who

lingered on the spot; and in a few minutes the altar, images, and all the ornaments of the church, were torn down and trampled under foot. The noise soon collected a mob, who flew, by a sudden and irresistible impulse, on the monasteries; and notwithstanding the interposition of the magistrates, and the entreaties of Knox and the other ministers, the fury of the people could not be restrained till these costly edifices were reduced to a heap of smoking ruins. This tumult was quite unpremeditated, and confined to the lowest of the inhabitants, or, as Knox calls them, "the rascal multitude." The queen-regent, however, glad of a pretext to crush the reformation, magnified this accidental riot into a designed rebellion, and, imputing the whole blame to the Protestants, assembled an army to avenge the insult.

Nothing was farther at this time from the minds of the reformers than to excite rebellion, or to gain their purpose by violent and unconstitutional means. "Cursed be they," was their language to her majesty, "that seek effusion of blood, war, or dissension. Let us possess Christ Jesus, and the benefit of his evangel, and none within Scotland shall be more obedient subjects than we shall be." They soon discovered, however, that the pledge of their allegiance was to be the renunciation of their religion; and that nothing would satisfy the queen and her advisers, but the suppression of the reformation by fire and sword. This brought matters to a crisis. When lord Ruthven, who was sheriff and provost of Perth, was commanded by her majesty to go home and suppress the reformed opinions in his jurisdiction, he told her very plainly, "that in what con-

cerned their bodies his charge was to keep them in order, but what concerned their souls was neither in his commission, nor would he meddle with it." And lord James Stewart, having been severely blamed by Francis, the husband of Mary queen of Scots, for taking part with the reformed, and charged "upon his allegiance" to leave them, boldly replied, "that he had done nothing against his allegiance, but what was lawful for maintenance of the liberties of the country, and propagation of the gospel, which it was no more lawful for him to abandon than to deny Jesus Christ."* If, therefore, any confusion ensued, if our reformers were compelled to assume a hostile attitude, the blame must rest with those who reduced them to the alternative of either resisting their sovereign, or submitting to have themselves and their country enslaved. Finding all their endeavours to obtain the peaceable enjoyment of their religion to be fruitless; perceiving that the queen, who had so often deceived and disappointed them, had now become their declared enemy—the leading protestants, who now began to be called the *lords of the congregation*, saw the necessity of arming and combining in self-defence. For this purpose, they drew up another engagement or bond, in which they renounced popery, and pledged themselves to mutual support in the defence and promotion of the true religion. This bond received numerous subscriptions. And now, having taken their ground, and finding their numbers daily increasing, they saw that the only effectual method to prevent the odious chains of ecclesiastical tyranny from being rivetted on themselves and their posterity, was to make

* Lord Herries' Hist. Memoirs, pp. 37, 42.

a united and determined effort to shake them off for ever. They demanded the reformation of the church, and each of them engaged, in his own sphere, to take immediate steps for abolishing the popish service, and setting up the reformed religion in those places where their authority extended, and where the people were friendly to their design.

St. Andrews was the place fixed on for commencing these operations. In the beginning of June 1559, the earl of Argyle and lord James Stewart, afterwards earl of Murray, who was prior of the abbey of St. Andrews, made an appointment with Knox to meet him on a certain day in that city. Travelling along the east coast of Fife, the reformer preached at Anstruther and Crail, setting before the people the danger in which the civil and religious liberties of the nation were placed by the invasion of foreign and mercenary troops, sent to enslave them by a popish faction in France, and bidding them prepare themselves either to die like men, or live as freemen. Such was the effect of his exhortation, that altars, images, and all monuments of idolatry in these places, were immediately pulled down and destroyed. The archbishop of St. Andrews, apprized of his design to preach in that town, and apprehending similar consequences, assembled an armed force, and sent information to the lords, that if John Knox dared to present himself in the pulpit of his cathedral, "he should gar him be saluted with a dozen of culverings, * whereof the most part should light on his nose." The noblemen having met to consult what

* A species of fire-arms.

ought to be done, considering that the queen, with her French troops, was lying at Falkland, only twelve miles from St. Andrews, while they "were only accompanied with their quiet households," and fearing lest his appearance in the pulpit should lead to the sacrifice of his life, and the lives of those who were determined to defend him, agreed that Knox should desist from preaching at this time, and urged him very strenuously to comply with their advice. The intrepid reformer, however, disdained all such fears, and would not listen to their solicitations. "God is my witness," said he, "that I never preached Christ Jesus in contempt of any man, or to the worldly hurt of any creature. But to delay to preach to-morrow (unless the body be violently withhelden) I cannot of conscience; for in this town and kirk began God first to call me to the dignity of a preacher, from the which I was reft by the tyranny of France, and procurement of the bishops, as ye all well enough know, and it is no time now to recite. This only I cannot conceal, which more than ane has heard me say, when the body was far absent fra Scotland, that my assured hope was, in open audience, to preach in Sanct Androis, before I departed this life. And therefore, my lords, seeing that God, above the expectation of many, has brought the body to the same place, I beseech your honours not to stop me to present myself unto my brethren. And as for the fear of danger that may come to me, let no man be solicitous; for my life is in the custody of Him whose glory I seek; and therefore I cannot so fear their boast nor tyranny, that I will cease from doing my duty, when God of his mercy offereth the occasion. I desire the hand nor weapon of no man to defend

me; only I crave audience, which if it be denied here unto me at this time, I must seek farther where I may have it."

This bold reply silenced all remonstrance; and the next day, being the Sabbath, 10th June 1559, Knox appeared in the pulpit, and preached before the lords of the congregation, and a numerous assembly, without experiencing the slightest interruption. He discoursed on the subject of our Saviour's ejecting the buyers and sellers from the temple, and overthrowing the tables of the money-changers: "Take these things hence: it is written, My Father's house shall be a house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves." From this he took occasion to expose the enormous corruptions introduced into the church under the papacy, and to point out what was incumbent on Christians, in their different spheres, for removing them. On the three following days he preached in the same place; and such was the influence of his doctrine, that the provost, bailies, and inhabitants harmoniously agreed to set up the reformed worship in the town; the church was stripped of images and pictures, and the monasteries were pulled down.

The demolition of the monasteries and other religious houses, which marked the commencement of our reformation, has furnished a rich topic for declamation to many, who refer to it as a proof of the bigotry and barbarism of our reformers. We allow they may have gone too far, under the excitement of the moment; and "can any man think," says honest Row, "that in such a great alteration in a kingdom, every man did everything rightly?" But let us do them justice. Had the queen-regent, instead

of resorting to violent measures to suppress the reformation, listened to the petitions of her noblemen for inquiry into the abuses of the church, or even allowed her subjects liberty to profess the gospel, these excesses would never have occurred. It was only when this liberty was denied them, and they were required to submit unconditionally to the will of the popish clergy, that the people had recourse to this method of redress. "After which answer," says sir James Balfour, "the congregation goes to the staitly monastry of Scone, and pulls it down, and solemnly burns all the Roman trashe, as images, altars, and the lyke. Then proceed they fordward to Stirling, Cambuskenneth, and Linlithgow, and there demolish and pull down all whatsoever carried any symbol of the Roman harlot."* The churches and cathedrals, be it observed, were generally spared; it was only the monasteries, and places identified with the reigning superstition, that fell a sacrifice to the popular fury. And when we consider that these formed the strongholds of popery, against which the nation was now at war, and the receptacles of a lazy, corrupt, and tyrannical priesthood, who had so long fattened on the substance of a deluded people, there appears more good policy than some are willing to admit in the advice which John Knox is said to have inculcated: "Down with those crow-nests, else the crows will *big* in them again."† Another view of the matter, equally capable of defence, is suggested by an anecdote which he relates of a woman, who, when the flames of the monasteries in Perth were ascending to heaven, and some were lamenting their destruction, exclaimed, that if they knew the scenes of vil-

* Annales of Scotland, i. 316.

† Row's MS. Hist., p. 6.

lany and debauchery that had passed within these walls, they would "admire the judgments of Heaven, in bringing these haunts of pollution to such an end."*

* Knox, Hist.

CHAPTER III.

National establishment of the reformed religion—First meeting of the general assembly—The First Book of Discipline—Constitution of the church of Scotland—Anecdotes of John Knox and queen Mary—The murder of the Good Regent—Death of John Knox.

THERE was a striking difference between the Scottish and the English reformation. In England the reigning powers took the lead, and the people followed, as they best might, in the wake of royal authority. In Scotland, the people were converted to the protestant faith before the civil power had moved a step in the cause; and when the legislature became friendly to the reformation, nothing remained for it to do, but to ratify the profession which the nation had adopted. The consequence has been, that the church of England, with all her excellences (and they are many), has never ventured to advance beyond the limits prescribed by queen Elizabeth; while the Scottish church, carrying the legislature along with her, has made various steps in reformation—has, on more than one occasion, improved her standards, pointed her testimony to the times, and discarded from her creed and constitution everything which seemed, even by implication, to symbolize with the apostasy of the church of Rome.

In the month of August 1560, when, through the friendly aid of England, the French troops had been expelled from Scotland, and when, after the queen-regent's death, a free parliament was assembled, popery, as a matter of course, was abolished, and the protestant religion substituted in its place. Considering the suddenness with which this change was effected, the business was wisely and well conducted. A petition was presented to the parliament by the ministers and others, in the name of the people, requesting them to secure, by legal enactments, the profession of the true religion. The parliament then requested the ministers to lay before them a summary of Christian doctrine, which they could prove to be agreeable to scripture; and, in the course of a few days, the ministers presented a confession, consisting of twenty-five articles, which the parliament, after due examination, formally ratified and approved. This confession agrees in all points with those of the other reformed churches, and is not materially different from the Westminster confession now in use, which was afterwards adopted by the church of Scotland. It was remarked, that when it was read over, in the audience of the whole parliament, in which there were several lords and bishops known to be disaffected to the reformation, only three of the noblemen voted against it, giving no other reason for their dissent than, "We will beleve as our forefatheris belevit:" "the bishops spak nathing." Upon which, the earl Marishal, after declaring his own approbation of the articles, protested, "that if any ecclesiastics should after this oppose themselves to this our confession, they should be entitled to no credit, seeing that,

having long advisement and full knowledge of it, none of them is found, in lawful, free, and quiet parliament, to vote against it."

This amounted, it will be observed, to a national establishment of the protestant religion. The nation, by its rulers and representatives, passed from popery to protestantism; and, in its civil capacity, ratified (not the gospel, indeed, which no acts of parliament can ratify, but) the profession of the gospel, which the people, in their religious capacities, had already embraced. And thus it appears that there was a civil establishment of the true religion in Scotland before there was even an established church, for the reformed church of Scotland was not as yet regularly organized, much less endowed. The legal recognition of the presbyterian church as an organized society was a subsequent step, and indeed not fully obtained till several years after this; the settlement of regular stipends on the ministers was still later. And yet, by the act of the state to which we have referred, the protestant religion became the national religion of Scotland. These are the plain facts; and we leave every one to form his own judgment on them. But if the *principle* of civil establishments of religion is to be debated at all, at this point must the battle begin; and the question to be decided is, whether it was right or wrong for the nation of Scotland to declare, by an act of its parliament, that popery was abolished, and that protestantism was thenceforth the national religion?

By the same parliament which established the protestant religion, another act was passed, which has been severely blamed, even by friends of the reformation, prohibiting the celebration of mass, under

severe penalties, which amounted, in extreme cases, even to death. The only apology which some can find for this dubious act of policy, is that the principles of religious liberty were not then so fully understood, and that it is no wonder our ancestors carried with them a portion of the intolerance of the Romish church, from which they had so lately escaped. Our reformers, however, had no idea of converting their creed into a penal code, or of punishing all who departed from it as heretics. They regarded papists as enemies to the state, and the leading principles of popery as subversive of all good order in society. The proscription of the mass, the characteristic symbol of popery, was certainly the most effectual way of putting down the civil nuisance. The truth is, they would not allow the mass to be a point of religion at all; they regarded it as manifest idolatry—an opinion in which every sound protestant will coincide; but having, erroneously we think, conceived that the Mosaic law against idolaters was still binding on Christian nations, they applied the statute to it as a civil crime. Whatever may be thought of this interpretation of the civil law, it was obviously a very different thing from the spirit of popery, which, stamping the whole of its creed with the attribute of infallibility, and denying all hope of salvation to those beyond its pale, enforces all its dogmas with civil pains on those whom it accounts heretics. And that the object of our reformers was not to punish the persons of heretics, or religious opinions as such, but to stay the plague of idolatry and profaneness in the land, appears from two facts which we shall now state. The first is, that the penalties actually inflicted on “mass-mongers,” as they were termed,

were entirely of the ignominious kind usually allotted to persons convicted of infamous crimes, and intended to brand the practice as odious and disreputable.* And the other fact, to which we refer with pride (and England, with all her boasted liberality, cannot say so much), is, that NOT A SINGLE PAPIST SUFFERED DEATH IN SCOTLAND FOR THE SAKE OF HIS RELIGION. We hear of four priests condemned to death for saying mass in Dunblane; but the sentence was remitted, and they were merely set in the pillory. Candour will ascribe this as much to the lenity and liberality of our protestant ancestors, as to the reluctance of the popish clergy to suffer martyrdom for conscience' sake. Very few of them, indeed, appear to have had much conscience in the matter, except on the point of their worldly emoluments; and the only instance on record of their taking the reformation to heart, is that of a poor priest in Cupar of Fife, who was so much distressed at seeing his altars and images demolished by the crowd, that on the following night he went and hanged himself.

The first meeting of the general assembly of the church of Scotland was held at Edinburgh, on the 20th of December 1560. It consisted of forty members, only six of whom were ministers; and its deliberations were conducted at first with great simpli-

* "Upon the second day of October 1561, Archibald Dowglas, provest of Edinburgh, with the baillies and counsale, causit ane proclamatioun be proclameit at the croce, commanding and charging all and sundry monks, freris, priestis, and all utheris papists and profane persons, to pas furth of Edinburgh within twenty-four hours next efter following, under the pane of burnying of disobeyaris upon the cheik, and harling of them throw the toun in ane cart: at the quhilk proclamatioun the quenis grace was very commovit. And the samyn day Mr. Thomas Macalyean was chosin provest of Edinburgh, and Archibald Dowglas dischargit, for making of the proclamatioun forrsaid without the quenis advyisé, togidder with all the baillies." (*Diurnal of Occurrents in Scotland*, p. 69.)

city and unanimity. As a proof of this, it may be mentioned, that seven different meetings of Assembly were held without a moderator or president.* It may appear still more extraordinary to some to be told that none were appointed to represent the sovereign in the general assembly, as commissioner, for at least twenty years after the reformation; though, during that time, there were no fewer than thirty-nine or forty assemblies, and though the supreme magistrate, especially during the regency of Murray and Lennox, was very friendly to the church and her interests.† At the second general assembly there was some debate, raised by Maitland of Lethington, about the propriety of their meeting without the queen's authority. "The question is," said Lethington, "whether the queen alloweth such conventions." "If the liberty of the kirk," said a member, "should depend upon the queen's allowance or disallowance, we are assured we shall be deprived, not only of assemblies, but of the public preaching of the gospel." "No such thing," said Lethington. "Well, time will try," replied Knox; "but I will add, take from us the freedom of assemblies, and take from us the evangel; for without assemblies how shall good order and unity in doctrine be kept?" The greater part of the nobles and barons having expressed their concurrence in this sentiment, they requested her majesty's friends to inform her, that if she entertained any suspicion of their proceedings, she might appoint some one to hear their deliberations; and this matter being amicably settled, the assembly convened in virtue of the intrinsic power granted by Christ to his church, and concluded their

* Life of Knox, ii. 18.

† Stevenson, *Introd.*, i. 117.

work without so much as petitioning for the countenance of the civil power. So early did the church of Scotland assert the royal prerogatives of the King of Zion.*

What a wonderful change had now come over the face of Scotland! A few years before this, idolatry was rampant, and, to use the words of Patrick Hamilton, "darkness covered this realm." Now superstition has vanished, and the light of truth has arisen on the mountains and valleys of our land. A year ago, it was blasphemy to say a word against the mass; now, the mass itself is denounced as blasphemy. Not a cross, not an image, not a cowl, not a mitre is to be seen; and were it not for the smoking ruins of some monastery, or the vacant niches of a cathedral, it could hardly have been known by a stranger that popery had ever existed in the country. Still, however, the victory was not secured. Still, the dignitaries of the church retained their titles, and claimed all their temporal privileges. Still, though the popish service was proscribed, the protestant worship, except in a few places of note, was not substituted in its place. There was a sad dearth of preachers; the mass of the people, in town and country, were so poor as hardly to be able to provide for their own subsistence; and it became a matter of indispensable necessity that some means should be adopted to provide them with religious instruction.

Under the papacy, no regular provision had been made, either for the support of the poor, who were shamefully neglected, or for the maintenance of a working clergy. Two years before the reformation,

* Calderwood, p. 30; Knox, p. 295.

a kind of proclamation was issued, and affixed to the gates of the monasteries and other religious houses, in the name of "the blind, the lame, bedrals, widows, orphans, and other poor," complaining that the alms of the Christian people had been unjustly stolen from them by monks and friars, who are described as "hail of body, stark, sturdie, and abill to work;" and charging them "to remove furth of the hospitals which they now occupied, that we, the lawful proprietors thereof, may enter and enjoy the commodities of the kirk, which ye have wrangouslie haldin from us." The preaching friars were left to shift for themselves, and derived a miserable subsistence from the contributions of the faithful, while the higher clergy and the monks lived in luxurious ease. The reformed church, however, having discarded these drones and dignitaries, and depending for success on the preaching of the word, required funds for the support of a ministry equal to the spiritual need of the whole population; and our reformers justly considered that, after the poor had been provided for, they had a claim on the revenues of the church for the support of such a ministry.

But other and more powerful claimants for the property of the kirk appeared in the nobility and landed gentlemen, whose ancestors had swelled the revenues of the church by large donations of land and money. Many years before the reformation, the laird of Grange, who was treasurer to James V., and a secret friend of the protestant cause, advised his majesty, "gif he wad do weill and be rich, to tak hame again, to the profit of the crown, all vacant benefices, by little and little, as they may fall by de-cease of every prelate." The king relished the pro-

posal so highly, that, as sir James Melville informs us, he determined to carry it into effect; and the style in which he attempted it affords a curious illustration of the rudeness of the times. At his first meeting with the prelates, "he could not contean him any langer, and after many sour reproofs, he said, 'Wherefore gave my predecessors sa mony lands and rents to the kirk? Was it to maintain hawks, and dogs, and harlots to a number of idle priests? Pack you off to your charges, and reform your own lives, and be not instruments of discord between my subjects and me. The king of England burns you, the king of Denmark beheads you; but, by —, *I shall stick you with this same whinger.*' And therewith he drew out his dagger upon them, and they fled in great fear from his presence."* Knox tells us another anecdote, which shows how the nobility felt on this point. After a dispute between the reformers and some of the popish clergy, in which the latter were so sorely baffled that they could give no direct answer to the arguments against the mass, the noblemen present said, "We have been miserably deceived heretofore; for if the mass may not obtain remission of sins to the quick and dead, wherefore were all the abbacies so richly doted with our temporal lands?"

It was very natural, therefore, when the reformation revealed the falsity of the pretences on which so much of their wealth had been obtained by the church, and the costly establishments of the prelates were abolished, that the landed gentry should claim a portion at least of the forfeited property. But in doing this, they showed a degree of avarice and ra-

* Sir J. Melville's Memoirs, p. 63.

capacity hardly to be expected from persons who had taken such an active part in reforming the church. Though the protestant religion had been established by the law of the land, the church, as we have said, was still unendowed; and the ministers were supported, very sparingly, on the benevolence of the people, or of the gentlemen who received them into their houses. Knox and his brethren, perceiving how matters were going, and that the whole ecclesiastical property would soon be swallowed up, insisted that a considerable proportion of it should be reserved for the support of the poor, the founding of universities and schools, and the maintenance of an efficient ministry throughout the country. At last, after great difficulty, the privy council came to the determination, that the ecclesiastical revenues should be divided into three parts—that two of them should be given to the ejected prelates during their lives, which afterwards reverted to the nobility; and that the third part should be divided between the court and the protestant ministry. “Well!” exclaimed Knox, on hearing of this arrangement, “if the end of this order be happy, my judgment fails me. I see two parts freely given to the devil, and the third must be divided between God and the devil. Who would have thought, that when Joseph ruled in Egypt, his brethren should have travelled for victuals, and have returned with empty sacks unto their families? O happy servants of the devil, and miserable servants of Jesus Christ, if, after this life, there were not hell and heaven!”*

* Even this pittance, it would appear, was not fully or regularly paid to the ministers. Various means were taken to elude a settlement; and in 1567, we find the General Assembly, in their instructions to their commissioners whom they sent to deal with the privy council, thus ex-

But there was another thing that tried the temper of the nobility, and the patience of the reformers, as much as the settlement of the patrimony of the church; and this was the ratification of the order, government, and discipline of the church. For this purpose, in the year 1560, a commission was given to John Knox, with Messrs. Winram, Spotswoode, Row, and Douglas, to set down the heads of discipline, as they had already done those of doctrine. This was effected, and a plan of government was soon drawn up, and cordially approved of by the general assembly, under the name of *The First Book of Discipline*. When this book, however, was submitted to the privy council, it was warmly opposed by some of the nobility, who dreaded that its provisions would interfere with their selfish plans for appropriating the revenues of the church. On this account, though subscribed by a number of the nobility, barons, and burgesses in parliament, it did not receive a formal ratification. But it was still regarded by the church as a standard book, and continued to regulate her practice and guide her decisions.

The constitution of the reformed church of Scotland, as laid down in the First Book of Discipline, was purely presbyterian, and remarkably simple. It

pressing their disappointment: "That Satan, by his instruments, had of long time, and by many subtile ways, laboured to hinder the progress of true religion within this realm; and that now the same was in hazard to be utterly subverted, chiefly through the poverty of the ministers that ought to preach the word of life unto the people; some being compelled to leave their vocation, and betake them to civil callings; others so distracted through worldly cares, as they could not wait upon the preaching of the word so diligently as they wished." To prevent this, and also to provide for the "poor and indigent members of Christ," they entreated that the patrimony of the church should be restored to the just possessors. (*Spotswoode*, p. 209.)

recognises four classes of ordinary and permanent office-bearers—the pastor, the doctor, the elder, and the deacon. The two former were distinguished merely by the different work assigned to them—the pastor being appointed to preach and administer the sacraments, while the doctor's office was simply theological and academical. The elder was a spiritual officer, ordained to assist, in the discipline and government of the church, those “who laboured in word and doctrine;” and to the deacon was assigned, as of old, the oversight of the revenues of the church and the care of the poor. The affairs of each congregation were managed by the kirk-session, which was composed of the pastor, elders, and deacons; the weekly exercise, afterwards converted into the presbytery, took cognizance of those matters which concerned the neighbouring churches; the provincial synod attended to the wider interests of the churches within its bounds; and the general assembly, which was composed of ministers and elders, commissioned from the different presbyteries of the kingdom, and which met twice or thrice a-year, attended to the general interests of the national church. These were the general features of the system, in the formation of which it was the study of our reformers to imitate, as closely as possible, the model of the primitive churches exhibited in the New Testament; while, in all the subordinate details of their discipline, they steadily kept in view the apostolic rule, “Let all things be done unto edification.” Though shackled, in point of practice, by the imperfect provision made for the settlement of churches, and labouring under the disadvantage of not having obtained a civil ratification to their discipline, which would have

settled the point at once, they declared it as a principle founded on the word of God, that "it appertaineth to the people, and to every several congregation, to elect their own minister." Indeed, from its very infancy, the church of Scotland was, essentially and pre-eminently, the church of the people. Their interests were consulted in all its arrangements; and the people on their part, who had been mainly instrumental in its erection, felt deeply interested in its preservation. They watered the roots of their beloved church with their blood; and when it "waxed a great tree," and they were permitted to lodge under the shadow of its branches, they surveyed it with the fond pride of men who felt that they had a share in its privileges, and therefore a stake in its prosperity.

Owing to the paucity of ministers, and as a temporary expedient till presbyteries were fully organized, it was judged proper, after supplying the principal towns, to assign to the rest the superintendence of a large district, over which they were appointed to travel, somewhat in the character of missionaries, for the purpose of preaching in vacant parishes, planting churches, and inspecting the ministers and readers within their bounds; of their diligence in which services they were to give a report to the assembly. These persons were called superintendents. With strange inconsistency, those very writers who taunt the Scottish church with being republican in her constitution, have laid hold of this circumstance as a proof that she was originally prelatical! But in point of fact, these superintendents differed from other ministers in little else than the greater amount of labour allotted to them. They

were the servants of the church courts, and were as much amenable to them as any functionary in the excise now is to her majesty's board of commissioners. They were admitted in the same manner as other pastors, being elected by the people and ordained by the ordinary ministers. They were equally subject to rebuke, suspension, and deposition, as the rest of the ministers of the church. They could not exercise any spiritual jurisdiction without the consent of the provincial synods; and they were accountable to the general assembly for the whole of their conduct. Nor was there anything in the appointment of these superintendents inconsistent with the genius and spirit of presbytery—a system which, if we may so speak, possesses a plastic character, capable of accommodating itself to any country, to any form of civil government, and to every condition of the church. The grand peculiarity of presbytery, which distinguishes it from diocesan episcopacy, or prelacy, lies not in the want of superintendence—for the pastor with his session forms the true primitive parochial episcopacy, while to the presbytery belongs the superintendence of the congregations within its bounds; nor does it consist in the equality of its orders, for it has various orders; nor even in the temporary and delegated precedence of one over the rest of his brethren, for this belongs to every moderator in a church court; but it lies in the parity of its ministers, and placing the supreme jurisdiction in a general assembly, the members of which, as in our houses of parliament and courts of justice, assume no pre-eminence in authority over one another. If there was any danger of superintendents becoming prelates, it arose from the tendency of human nature,

in certain circumstances, to abuse powers conferred for the best of purposes. Our ancestors soon began to perceive this; and so suspicious were they of anything approaching, or likely to lead, to a lordly domination over the brethren, that they refused to these superintendents the name of bishops; and as presbyteries were set up, this office gradually ceased on the death of the first incumbents.*

Different opinions will, of course, be formed of the polity adopted by the Scottish church, according to the leanings of individuals; and our object being not to discuss principles, but to state facts, we leave the reader to form his own conclusions. Our reformers, it is certain, drew their plan immediately from the scriptures; and, to use the words of Row, who had the best means of information, they "took not their example from any kirk in the world—no, not from Geneva." They have often been blamed for having swept away, from a morbid antipathy to popery, not only the abuses and corruptions of the church, but everything that was decent in its worship, and dignified in its government—leaving the kirk of Scotland as bare and barren of ornament as her native mountains. We allow that, having satisfied themselves that the church of Rome was the anti-christ of scripture, they were anxious to strip their establishment of everything that bore the least resemblance to her characteristic features. And they did this in conscientious obedience to the call, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her

* Life of Knox, ii. 9, 283; Row's MS. *Historie*, p. 12. Gilbert Rule, in his "Good Old Way," has answered all the arguments in favour of the contrary view of the subject, in "The Fundamental Charter."

plagues." But we deny that any point of order or doctrine was rejected merely because it had been held by the Romish church. With respect to *decency*, we defy any church to show more regard than was paid by our reforming ancestors to the precept, "Let all things be done decently and in order." And as to *ornaments* and *dignities*, people's ideas of these things will differ, according to the views they take of what true ornament or dignity is. If they refer to worldly ornaments and dignities, of these the reformed church of Scotland did not, and would not, boast; she disclaimed them as incompatible with the simplicity of Christ, and demeaning to the spiritual glory of his church. But there is an "honour which cometh from God;" and of this distinction she was emulous—in this, if we may so speak, she was proud to excel all other churches. The basis of her constitution, of which we have presented an imperfect sketch, may be given in few words:—"ONE IS YOUR MASTER, AND ALL YE ARE BRETHREN." Recognising no earthly head, rejecting all earthly control, she stood forth the immaculate spouse of Christ; and holding in her hand the word of God, as the charter of her rights, she pointed to her exalted king, seated on the throne of heaven. Placed on such a footing, the ministry of the gospel must command respect. That it has done so, is testified by the fact, that while the prelates of Rome, with all their mitres, croziers, and surplices, sunk into general contempt, being hated by the people for their tyranny, and scorned by the nobles for their arrogance, the humble presbyterian pastor, faithfully discharging the duties of his office, met with respect and affection from all classes of his flock. And that

it must continue to do so, may be augured from the principles on which presbyterianism is founded—the principles of common sense as well as of scripture, and which, however they may be now slighted by some, will, by the blessing of God, survive the hostility that aims at their subversion, and flourish in a higher state of purity than ever they attained in the palmiest days of presbytery, long after the boasted fabrics of human wisdom and human folly have crumbled into dust.

The infant reformation had scarcely been established, when its safety was endangered by the arrival in Scotland of Mary queen of Scots. This princess having been married in early life to the French dauphin, was educated in the court of France, under the auspices of her uncle, the cardinal of Lorraine, and nursed up in a blind attachment to popery and arbitrary power. Every means had been employed, before she left France, to prejudice her mind against the reformers, and the religion which had been embraced by her subjects. The willing tool of an artful and deep-laid policy, she was taught that it would be the glory of her reign to bring back her kingdom to the obedience of Rome, and to co-operate with the popish princes of the continent, who had formed a plan for the universal extirpation of heresy. She arrived at Leith in August 1561, and was received by the good people of Edinburgh and Leith with every demonstration of joyous loyalty. She had hardly landed, however, when orders were issued for the celebration of the mass in her private chapel. The ministers regarded this direct breach of the law passed by the parliament, as a sure sign of the queen's resolution to set at defiance all that had been

done against popery and in behalf of the reformed religion. Many, however, of the common people, animated by the sudden fervour of loyalty inspired by the presence of their young and lovely queen, began to justify her, and declare their resolution to defend her in the enjoyment of her own religion. Even the lords of the congregation, though at first highly incensed at her conduct, were no sooner admitted into her presence, than, soothed and flattered by the fair speeches of this insinuating princess, they began to cool in their religious zeal. The effects of this transformation on the nobility are thus curiously described by an old historian of the period:—

“Every man, as he came up to court, accused them that were before him; but after they had remained a certain space, they came out as quiet as the former. On perceiving this, Campbell of Kinyeancleuch, a man of some humour, and zealous in the cause, said to lord Ochiltree, whom he met on his way to court, ‘My lord, now ye are come last of all; and I perceive that the fire edge is not yet off you; but I fear that, after the holy water of the court be sprinkled upon you, ye shall become as temperate as the rest. For I have been here now five days, and at first nothing was heard but—Down with the mass, hang the priest; but after they had been twice or thrice at the abbey, all that fervency passed. I think there be some enchantment, whereby men are bewitched.’”

There was one man, however, whom neither the blandishments of the court, nor the defection of his friends, could induce to desert his principles, or cool in his attachment to the cause of the reformation. Knox, the intrepid reformer, perceiving that the

queen was determined on prosecuting her designs, and that preparations were making for the celebration of mass in a more public and pompous manner than she had ventured on at first, took occasion to denounce the evils of idolatry from the pulpit, concluding his sermon with these remarkable words: "One mass is more fearful to me, than if ten thousand armed enemies were landed in any part of the realm, of purpose to suppress the whole religion." On hearing of this sermon, the queen sent for Knox, and held a long conference with him. She charged him with having taught the people to receive a religion different from that which was allowed by their princes. He replied, that true religion derived its origin and authority, not from princes, but from God; that princes were often most ignorant on this point; and referred to David, and to the primitive Christians. "Yea," said the queen; "but none of these men raised the sword against their princes." "Yet, you cannot deny," said Knox, "that they resisted; for those that do not obey the commandment, do in some sort resist." "But they resisted not with the sword." "God, madam, had not given to them the power and the means." "Think you, then," said the queen, "that subjects, having the power, may resist their princes?" "If princes exceed their bounds, madam," replied the reformer, "no doubt they may be resisted, even by power. For no greater honour is to be given to kings than God has commanded to be given to father and mother. But the father may be struck with a frenzy, in which he would slay his children. Now, madam, if the children arise, join together, apprehend the father, take the sword from him, bind his hands, and keep him in prison

till the frenzy is over, think you, madam, that the children do any wrong? Even so, madam, it is with princes that would murder the children of God that are subject to them."

On hearing these bold sentiments, so different from anything that she had been accustomed to, Mary stood, for nearly a quarter of an hour, silent and amazed. At length, addressing the reformer, she said, "Weel, then, I perceive that my subjects shall obey you, and not me." "God forbid," answered he; "but my travail is that both princes and subjects obey God. And think not, madam, that wrong is done to you when ye are willed to be subject to God; for he it is that subjects the people under princes: yea, God craves of kings that they be, as it were, foster-fathers to his kirk, and commands queens to be nurses unto his people." "Yea," quoth she, "but ye are not the kirk that I will nourish. I will defend the kirk of Rome; for it is, I think, the true kirk of God." "Your will, madam, is no reason; neither doth your thought make that Roman harlot to be the true and immaculate spouse of Jesus Christ." He added, he was ready to prove that the Roman church had, within five hundred years, degenerated farther from the purity of religion taught by the apostles than the Jewish church, which crucified Christ, had degenerated from the ordinances God gave them by Moses. "My conscience is not so," said the queen. "Conscience, madam, requires knowledge; and I fear that right knowledge ye have nane." "But I have both heard and read." "So, madam, did the Jews, who crucified Christ Jesus; they read the law and the prophets, and heard them interpreted

after their manner. Have you heard any teach but such as the pope and cardinals have allowed? and you may be assured that such will speak nothing to offend their own estate." The queen, after some further reasoning, told him, that although she was unable to contend with him in argument, she knew some who would answer him. "Madam," replied Knox, fervently, "would to God that the learnedest papist in Europe were present with your grace to sustain the argument, and that you would wait patiently to hear the matter reasoned to an end!" "Well," said she, "you may get that sooner than you believe." "Assuredly," said Knox, "if ever I get that in my life, I get it sooner than I believe; for the ignorant papist cannot patiently reason; and the learned and crafty papist will never come to your presence, madam, to have the ground of their religion searched out. When you shall let me see the contrary, I shall grant myself to have been deceived in that point." Thus ended this extraordinary conference. On taking his leave of her majesty, the reformer said, "I pray God, madam, that you may be as blessed within the commonwealth of Scotland as ever Deborah was in the commonwealth of Israel."*

Some time after this, the queen, although she had obtained intelligence of the massacre of Vassy in France, where her uncle, the duke of Guise, had attacked a congregation of protestants peaceably assembled for worship, and butchered a number of them, gave a splendid ball to her foreign servants, at which the dancing was prolonged to a late hour. Against this conduct Knox had inveighed in severe

* Knox, p. 290; M'Crie's Life of Knox, ii. 32, &c.

terms from the pulpit, and he was again summoned before her majesty. In his defence, he declared that he had been misrepresented, which he would show the queen, provided she would be pleased to hear him repeat, as exactly as he could, what he had preached the day before. Mary was obliged, for once, to listen to a protestant sermon. When he had finished, she told him, that if he heard anything about her conduct which displeased him, he ought to come to herself privately, and she would willingly listen to his admonitions. Knox easily saw through this proposal, which was evidently intended to prevent him from saying anything in public that might be displeasing to the court. He excused himself on the ground of his office; and, retiring, he jocularly observed, "Albeit at your grace's commandment I am heir now, yit can I not tell what uther men shall judge of me, that at this time of day am absent from my buke, and waiting upon the court." "Ye will not always be at your buke," said the queen, in a pet, and turning her back upon him. As he left the room, "with a reasonable merry countenance," he overheard one of the popish attendants saying, "He is not afraid!" "Why should the pleasing face of a gentilwoman afray me?" said he, regarding them with a sarcastic scowl; "I have luiked in the face of mony angry *men*, and yit have not been afrayed above measour."

At this time Knox was the only minister of Edinburgh, and there was only one place of worship—St. Giles'—which, however, was capable of accommodating no fewer than three thousand persons. We may conceive the effect produced on this immense multitude by the eloquent declamations, the

fervent appeals, and overwhelming invectives, of such a preacher as Knox. And we need not wonder that the proud, the self-willed queen of Scots, who had lived amidst the flatteries and pleasures of a licentious court, and who would not listen to the advices of her most sage and favourite counsellors, should have ill brooked the unsparing rebukes of the Scottish reformer. Their last interview was more stormy than the preceding, and presents so characteristic a view of Knox, that, familiar as it may be to many of you, we cannot avoid noticing it. He had deeply offended her majesty by protesting against her marriage with Darnley. "Never had prince been handled," she passionately exclaimed, "as she was; she had borne with him in all his rigorous speeches; she had sought his favour by all means; and yet," said she, "I cannot be quit of you. I vow to God I shall be once revenged!" On pronouncing these words, she burst into a flood of tears. When she had composed herself, Knox proceeded calmly to make his defence. "Out of the pulpit," he said, "few had occasion to complain of him; but there he was not his own master, but was bound to obey Him who commanded him to speak plainly, and to flatter no flesh on the face of the earth." Mary again burst into tears. Her courtiers tried to mitigate her grief and indignation by all the arts of blandishment; but during this scene the stern and inflexible mind of the reformer displayed itself. He continued silent, with unaltered countenance, until the queen had given vent to her feelings. He then protested, "that he never took delight in the distress of any creature; that it was with great difficulty he could see his own boys weep

when he corrected them, and far less could he rejoice in her majesty's tears; but seeing he had given her no just cause of offence, and had only discharged his duty, he was constrained, though unwillingly, to sustain her tears, rather than hurt his conscience and betray the commonwealth by his silence."

This apology inflamed the queen even more than the offence; she ordered him instantly to leave her presence, and await the signification of her pleasure in an adjoining room. There he stood alone, none of his friends venturing to show him the slightest countenance. In this situation he addressed himself to the ladies of the court who were sitting in their rich dresses in the chamber: "O fair ladies, how pleasing were this lyfe of yours, if it sould always abyde, and then, in the end, that we might pass to heiven with all this gay gear! But fye upon that knave Death, that will come, whether we will or not!"

The subsequent history of the unfortunate Mary is too well known to require notice. For a short time, a dark cloud hung over the reformed church. The queen, by her alluring manners, gained over a party of the nobles. The earl of Murray and other protestant noblemen were compelled to take shelter in England; mass was openly celebrated, and Knox, for his fidelity in warning the people against the consequences, was accused of high treason, and placed in such imminent hazard of his life, that his friends advised him to quit Edinburgh for a season. To crown all, Mary joined the league which had been planned by Catherine of Medicis and the duke of Alva, those bloodiest of all persecutors, and which bound her to join with them in the *extermination* of all heretics—in other words, she signed the death-

warrant of the great mass of her own subjects, nobility, gentry, ministers, and commons.* But these gloomy appearances were soon dispelled by her own infatuated conduct. Disgusted with Darnley, and irritated by the assassination of David Rizzio, an Italian musician, whom she had made her secretary,† she abandoned herself to the counsels of the earl of Bothwell, who, to gain his own ambitious ends, plotted the murder of the king. The unfortunate Darnley, was decoyed to Edinburgh, and lodged in a house in the outskirts of the town. On the morning of the 10th February, 1567, the whole city was awakened by a tremendous explosion, which was found to proceed from the house in which the king was lodged having been blown up with gunpowder. His dead body was found lying in the neighbourhood. The whole kingdom was thrown into a ferment; the murder was traced to Bothwell, the queen's favourite; and the suspicions of all fell upon the queen as an accomplice in the barbarous deed. These suspicions were soon confirmed by her marriage with the murderer of her husband, and led to a complete change of government. The protestant noblemen were restored; the queen was obliged to abdicate the throne, and ultimately to flee into England, and her infant son was proclaimed king of Scotland, by the title of James VI.

Poor Mary might have lived and reigned happily, had she not been a devoted papist. But she died the

* Tytler's History of Scotland, vii. 18-20.

† Rizzio or Riccio, was suspected, on good grounds, to be a pensioner of Rome. (*Tytler's Hist.*, vii. 19.) His overbearing pride created him many enemies, and among others the husband of Mary, who never rested till he had procured his destruction. (See note A, *Mr. Tytler's charge against John Knox.*)

victim of foreign intrigues more than of her private vices. The latter might have been tolerated by her subjects; but she dealt in larger crimes, and lent herself to traffic with the religion, liberties, and lives of her countrymen. Her memory has shared a similar fate; for her injudicious admirers have sought to vindicate her at the expense of the reformers and the reformation. In defence of these, again, others have been compelled to tell the truth; and the reputation of the beautiful but frail princess, which was too tender to admit of handling, has been fairly crushed in the collision.

In awarding their due meed of praise to the instruments employed by providence in accomplishing the Scottish reformation, it would be ungrateful to pass without notice the services rendered to the cause by James, earl of Murray. This excellent nobleman, who succeeded to the regency, after the deposition of his sister, queen Mary, was universally respected and beloved as a governor. Warmly attached to the reformation from its commencement, and evincing by his private virtues the sincerity of his religious professions, he entered office at a critical period, and it may be said that to his prudence and decision Scotland owed, under God, the preservation of the reformed religion. To the unfortunate queen, while she retained the reins of government, he testified all brotherly kindness; but when she had forfeited the regards of all good men and the loyalty of all good subjects, the noble firmness with which he upheld the dignity of government, and prosecuted the murderers of the late king, exposed him to the vengeance of these mean-spirited assassins. One

Hamilton of Bothwellhaugh, whose life the regent had spared after it had been forfeited to the laws of his country, smarting under an injury which he unjustly ascribed to the man who pardoned him,* lay in wait for his victim as he rode through Linlithgow, and firing through a window, mortally wounded him, and then made his escape on horseback. This dastardly deed, which, in the manner as well as the spirit in which it was perpetrated, has nothing to redeem it from a resemblance to the base attempts of a modern Fieschi, has been actually applauded by some of the partisans of Mary; while they hold up their hands in horror at the execution of archbishop Hamilton, who confessed on the scaffold his participation in the infamous transaction! But Murray's memory is embalmed in the page of impartial history. De Thou, the great French historian, affirms, that "he was a man without ambition, without avarice, incapable of doing an injury to any one, distinguished by his virtue, affability, beneficence, and innocence of life." And Spotswoode, who must have conversed with many personally acquainted with Murray, says: "He was a man truly good, and worthy to be ranked among the best governors that this kingdom hath enjoyed, and

* Life of Knox, ii. 165, and note W. The story, so often retailed, of regent Murray's cruelty to Hamilton's wife, has been found out to be a complete forgery, resting solely on the authority of Crawford's *Memoirs*, a book which has been proved to be a tissue of fabrications from beginning to end. (See *Preface to Historie of King James the Sixth*, Bannatyne edit.) Murray's assassination was the result of a plot, in which the lairds of Fernherst and Buccleuch had a chief share. One of their followers, on the day after the murder, and before it could be known on the borders, said, in reply to another who threatened him with the regent's displeasure, "Tush, the regent is cauld as the bit in my horse's mouth." (*Bannatyne's Mem.*, p. 4, Ban. edit.)

therefore to this day honoured with the title of *The Good Regent*.*

Knox did not long survive the good regent, whose untimely death he, in common with the whole country, deeply deplored. Having returned to Edinburgh, he resumed, with his usual ardour, his ministerial labours, in which he was now ably assisted by his colleague, John Craig. But a stroke of apoplexy, from the effects of which he never fully recovered, and his incessant cares, brought on him prematurely the infirmities of age, and he was soon unable to make himself be heard in the large church of St. Giles. The following description of his personal appearance at this time, given by James Melville in his Diary, is exceedingly striking: "Of all the benefits I had that year (1571), was the coming of that maist notable prophet and apostle of our nation, Mr. John Knox, to St. Andrews. I heard him teach there the prophecies of Daniel. I had my pen and my little book, and tuk away sic things as I could comprehend. In the opening up of his text, he was moderat, the space of an halff-houre; but when he enterit to application, he made me sa to grew and tremble, that I culd nocht hald a pen to wryt. I heard him oftymes utter those threatenings, in the hicht of their pryde, whilk the eyes of monie saw cleirlye brought to pass. Mr. Knox wald sumtyme

* See the character of Murray cleared from the aspersions of Dr. Robertson and other historians, in *Life of Knox*, vol. ii., note W. Mr. Tytler, who manifests such horror at the assassination of David Rizzio, passes the murder of regent Murray without any expression of sympathy for the victim or abhorrence of the crime. He even attempts to anticipate any such emotions in the breasts of his readers, by repeating, as an undoubted fact, the story about Hamilton's wife, and reiterating the charge of betraying Norfolk, which even Hume has said he could prove to be "no way dishonourable." (*Tytler's Hist. of Scot.*, vol. vii.)

come in and repose him in our college-yard, and call us scholars to him and bless us, and exhort us to know God and his wark in our country, and stand by the guid caus. I saw him everie day of his doctrine (preaching) go hulie and fear (cautiously) with a furring of martriks about his neck, a staff in the ane hand, and guid godlie Richart Ballenden, his servand, haldin up the other oxtar, from the abbey to the parochie kirk, and by the said Richart and an other servant, lifted up to the pulpit, whar he behovit to lean at his first entrie; bot or he had done with his sermon, he was sa active and vigorous, that he was lyk to ding that pulpit in blads and flie out of it.”*

But the time was fast approaching when this zealous servant of Jesus Christ was to rest from his labours. Feeling his end approaching, he desired that some one should read to him every day the 17th chapter of John’s gospel, the 53d chapter of Isaiah, and a portion of the epistle to the Ephesians. To his colleague, elders, and deacons, assembled in his room, he said: “The day approaches [for which I have long and vehemently thirsted, when I shall be released from my great labours and sorrows, and shall be with Christ. I know that many have complained of my too great severity; but God knows that my mind was always void of hatred to the persons of those against whom I thundered the severest judgments.” On Sabbath, after lying quiet for some time, he suddenly exclaimed, “If any be present, let them come and see the work of God.” He then burst out into these rapturous expressions: “I have been these two last nights in meditation on the

* Melville’s Diary, p. 26, Ban. edit.

troubled state of the church of Christ, despised of the world, but precious in the sight of God. I have called to God for her, and commended her to her husband, Jesus Christ. I have fought against spiritual wickedness in heavenly things, and have prevailed." Having seemed to fall into a slumber, interrupted with heavy moans, and being asked why he sighed so deeply, he replied, "I have during my life sustained many assaults of Satan, but at present he has assailed me most fearfully, and put forth all his strength to make an end of me at once. The cunning serpent has laboured to persuade me that I have merited heaven and eternal blessedness by the faithful discharge of my ministry. But blessed be God, who has enabled me to quench this fiery dart, by suggesting to me such passages as these: 'What hast thou that thou hast not received?' and, 'By the grace of God I am what I am.'" A little after, he said, "Now, for the last time," touching three of his fingers as he spoke, "I commend my soul, spirit, and body, into thy hand, O Lord." He then gave a deep sigh, saying, "Now it is come!" His attendants, perceiving that he had lost his speech, requested him to give a sign that he heard them, and died in peace; upon which he lifted up one of his hands and sighing twice, expired without a struggle. He died in the 67th year of his age, November 24, 1572. His funeral was attended by the regent Morton, all the nobility in town, and a vast concourse of people; and when his body was laid in the grave, Morton pronounced over it the short but emphatic epitaph: "There lies he who never feared the face of man!"*

* James Melville has it thus: "Here lies he that neither feared nor flattered any flesh." (*Diary*, p. 47.)

Such was the end of one whose name, while he lived, was a terror to the enemies of the reformation, and whose memory, since the day of his death, lay under a load of unmerited reproach, from which it has only lately been rescued. In the popular histories of the day, John Knox was held up as a fierce and gloomy bigot, equally a foe to polite learning and innocent enjoyment; and in his conduct towards the queen of Scots, to whose winning loveliness the rugged reformer afforded an inviting though most invidious contrast, he was represented as acting the part of a barbarian. We have cause to rejoice that the cloud of popular prejudice against our reformer has been dispelled, and his character placed in its proper light. It has been shown, that though sternly upright, and fearlessly courageous in the discharge of his duty, he was a tender-hearted and generous man; that his firmness as a patriot was based on the sincerest piety; and that the real design, as well as the effect of his measures, was to emancipate his country from superstition, ignorance, and barbarism, substituting in their place the blessings of education, liberty, and religion. The attempts made to revive the exploded calumnies of his enemies, whether by the sentimental admirers of queen Mary, or by the lovers of despotism and apostolic succession, have met with no credit or sympathy from the public; and, to their honour, the breasts of all true Scotsmen have once more learnt to vibrate in unison with the manly worth, the sacred patriotism, and the high-toned principle of the Scottish reformer.

CHAPTER IV.

Attempts to alter the constitution of the church of Scotland—Tulchan bishops—Anecdote of Campbell of Kinyeancleuch—Andrew Melville—Second Book of Discipline—The national covenant of Scotland—Excommunication of Montgomery—Melville's intrepidity—Scenes between James VI. and the presbyterian ministers.

KNOX, at his death, left the affairs of the kirk in a very unsettled state. Hitherto the church of Scotland had contended chiefly for the honour of Christ in his priestly and prophetic offices, against the corruptions of the papacy; she was soon called to struggle for the glory of his regal office, as the king of Zion, against the encroachments of civil power and prelatic ambition. Even before the death of Knox, an attempt was made to alter her form of government. In the year 1572, a convention, composed of superintendents and other ministers supposed to be favourable to this design, met at Leith, and, through the influence of Morton, were induced to consent that the titles of archbishop, bishop, &c., should be retained; and that qualified persons among the ministers should be advanced to these dignities. The general assembly, which was held the same year, condemned this innovation; but it served the design of Morton, which was, that these bishops should be nominally put in possession of the whole benefices.

but should rest satisfied with a small portion to themselves, and enter into a private bargain to deliver up the rest to him and other noblemen who acted with him. The ministers who were so mean as to accept of bishoprics under this disgraceful and simoniacal system, exposed themselves to general contempt, and were called, by way of derision, *tulchan bishops*—a tulchan being a calf's skin stuffed with straw, which the country people set up beside the cow to induce her to give her milk more freely. "The bishop," it was said, "had the title, but my lord had the milk." They were, indeed, mere phantom bishops, for most of them had no episcopal ordination; and they had no share in the government of the church.*

Still, the introduction of these nominal dignitaries threatened the future peace of the church; and the prospect of the confusion to which it might give rise, embittered the last hours of Knox, whose "dead hand and dying voice" were raised against the innovation. Hume of Godscroft informs us that the reformer "rebuked Morton sharply for divers things, but especially for his labouring to set up and maintain the estate of bishops;"† and shortly before his death, he admonished the same nobleman to

* The first tulchan bishop was Mr. John Douglas, a simple old man, whom Morton presented to the see of St. Andrews. "That was the first time I heard Mr. Patrick Constantine," says James Melville, "the week after the bishop was made. In his sermon he made three sorts of bishops, —my lord bishop, my lord's bishop, and the Lord's bishop. My lord bishop, said he, was in the papistry; my lord's bishop is now, when my lord gets the benefice, and the bishop serves for nothing but to make his title sure; and the Lord's bishop is the true minister of the gospel." (*Diary*, p. 25.) This Mr. Patrick Constantine was the same person with Patrick Adamson, who afterwards agreed to become one of "my lord's bishops."

† History of House of Douglas, ii. 234.

maintain the church of God, and his ministry; warning him that if he did not, "God would spoil him of all, and his end would be ignominy and shame"—a prediction which Morton acknowledged, before his execution, he had "fand true indeid."*

The history of the church during Morton's regency, from 1572 to 1578, presents little more than a series of struggles between the court and the kirk, all occasioned by the attempts of the regent to intrude that spurious kind of prelacy which we have now described. For some time he appeared likely to obtain the advantage. The old heroes of the reformation were fast dying out; and their successors, dreading the regent's resentment, or unwilling to show an example of insubordination by resisting his authority, were yielding up, inch by inch, the liberties of the church. We have no doubt, the idea which many have formed of the presbyterian clergy, from the common accounts of the period, is, that they were a body of rude fanatics, who took delight in opposing the civil power, and setting themselves up as spiritual dictators to king and subjects. The truth, however, as attested by history, is, that the greater part of the Scots ministers were a simple and facile race of men, easily deceived or overawed; that persons of weak or worldly minds were easily found, who, from fear of offending the great, or losing their livings, fell in with the measures of the court; and that, had it not been for a few active and energetic spirits, stirred up from time to time by a gracious Providence, to stem the tide of defection, they would, on more than one occasion, have bartered away their dearest privileges without a struggle. Such, we are

* Bannatyne, 508.

sorry to say, was the case at the period of which we now speak.

An incident occurred in 1574, which displayed their pusillanimity, as well as the grasping avarice of the regent. Among other plans for replenishing his coffers, Morton had fallen on the expedient of uniting three or four parishes under the care of one minister. Mr. John Davidson, who afterwards became minister of Prestonpans, and made a considerable figure in the history of the church, and who was at this time a young man and regent in the university of St. Andrews, had composed a poetical dialogue, which he called "A Conference betwixt the Clark and the Courtier," and in which he exposed, in terms more plain than pleasant, the mischievous and disreputable character of the practice.* Morton was highly incensed at this *jeu d'esprit*, and threatened the author with prosecution. The poem was presented to the general assembly for their judgment, and it was too evident that his brethren were afraid to give it the sanction of their approbation. On this occasion, the honest spirit of Campbell of Kinyeancleuch (the same who rated the nobility so severely for truckling to queen Mary) again manifested itself. Perceiving that the assembly were trifling in the matter, he turned to Mr. Davidson, and said, "Brother, look for no answer here. God hath taken away the hearts from men, that they dare not justify the truth, lest they displease the world. Therefore, cast you for the next best." "What is

* Among other lines, the poem contained the following:—

"Had gude John Knox not yet been deid,
It had not cum unto this heid:
Had they myntit till sic ane steir,
He had made heavin and eirth to hear."

that?" said Davidson. "Go home with me," replied his sagacious friend. "Nay," added he, seeing that the young minister hesitated, "ye may lawfully flee when ye are persecuted." Davidson, finding that Morton was determined against him, accepted the kind invitation, and set off under the laird's protection to Kinyeancleuch. On their journey, Campbell was seized with a severe and fatal illness. Feeling the near approach of death, this faithful and pious gentleman could not restrain his emotions when he thought of the state in which he left the church of his native land. "A pack of traitors," he exclaimed, referring to some of the ministers, "have sold Christ to the regent, as manifestly as ever Judas did? *What leal heart can contain itself unbursting?*" And he burst out into tears, accompanied with sobs and lamentations. He then stretched out his hand to Mr. Davidson, saying, "Take my best horse with you, and ride away with my blessing. The Lord bless you: gird up your loins, and make to your journey; for ye have a battle to fight, and few to take your part but the Lord only."*

I cannot pass this incident without giving utterance to a reflection which I have no doubt has already occurred to my readers. How seldom amongst our people in this day, and, alas! how much more seldom amongst our gentry, do we meet with a similar example of such tender-hearted concern for the interests of Zion! Amidst all the professions of zeal that we hear, how rarely, among any class of Christians, does the low state of religion in the Church draw a tear from the eye, or a sob from the heart!

The state of ecclesiastical affairs in Scotland,

* Calderwood's MS. Hist., iv., ad. an. 1574, Adv. Libr.

during this period, was very singular. A species of secular and nominal prelacy was upheld by the court, while the church, established by law, remained presbyterial. The assembly would grant the bishops no authority, even as their representatives in parliament, and demanded that, in all matters ecclesiastical, they should be subject to the church courts. This anomalous state of things could not last long without producing jealousies and dissensions. The churchmen who were raised to these titular dignities disdained to submit to the trial and censure of the general assembly; and the assembly, on the other hand, soon discovered that the continuance of bishops, even in name, was dangerous to the liberties of the church. In August 1575, while they declined interfering with the civil arrangement regarding these prelates, the assembly decided that "the name of bishop is injurie to all them that has a particular flock over the which he has ane peculiar charge;" and in several subsequent meetings, various acts were passed to the same effect, which, says Row, "were afterwards riven out of the registers of the general assembly (ye may easily judge by whom);"* yet, by God's good providence, a principal act was concluded, and remains undestroyed, in the year 1580, when it was declared that "the office of ane bishop, as it is now used and commonly taken within this realm, has no sure warrand, authority, or good ground out of the scripture of God, but is brought in by folly and corruption, to the great overthrow of the kirk of God."†

* He refers to archbishop Adamson, who obtained possession of the registers, and mutilated them in those places where prelacy had been condemned.

† Row's MS. Hist., ad. an. 1575; Booke of Univ. Kirk, pp. 152, 194; Ibid., Ban. edit., i. 342, ii. 453.

While matters were in the state now described, the cause of truth was revived, and a new spirit infused into the councils of the church, by the arrival in Scotland of another champion of the reformation, whose name deserves a place next to that of Knox—Andrew Melville. This accomplished scholar and divine had been residing for ten years on the continent, where he enlarged the learning which he had acquired at home, and which had procured him a very high character in the literary world. Endowed with all the firmness, intrepidity, and integrity of Knox, Melville was enabled, from his superior literary endowments, to confer lasting benefits upon his country, by introducing salutary reforms into its universities, and reviving a taste for letters. He was successively appointed principal of the university of Glasgow, and of the new college, St. Andrews; and being also a minister and a professor of divinity, he had a right to sit in the church courts. It was not long before he was called to lend the powerful aid of his talents in the struggle of the church against prelacy. And among other services, he had a chief hand in the composition of the Second Book of Discipline, which, after long and deliberate discussion, was approved and adopted by the general assembly in 1578.

Of this book, which, though it was not ratified by parliament, still forms a standard work in the church of Scotland, we may remark that it defines the government of the church still more exactly than the First Book of Discipline, which was drawn up hastily, to meet the emergency of a sudden conversion from popery. It traces the essential line of distinction between civil and ecclesiastical power; declaring,

that Jesus Christ has appointed a government in his church distinct from civil government, which is to be exercised in his name by such officers as he hath authorized, and not by civil magistrates, or under their direction. Civil authority, they say, has for its direct and proper object, the promoting of external peace and quietness among the subjects; ecclesiastical authority, the directing of men in matters of religion and conscience; yet as they are both of God, and tend to one common end, if rightly used, viz., the glory of God and making men good subjects, they ought to co-operate within their respective spheres, and fortify, without interfering with, one another. They claim the right of church courts, as courts of Christ, to convene and settle business independent of the civil power. These courts were divided into sessions, presbyteries, synods, and general assemblies. They admit of no superiority of office in the church above a teaching presbyter, or minister of the gospel—no pastor of pastors. None are to be intruded into the ministry contrary to the will of the congregation. And among the abuses which they desire to see reformed by the state, is lay-patronage, which they declare leads to intrusion, and is incompatible with “lawful election, and the assent of the people over whom the person is placed, as the practice of the apostolical and primitive kirk and good order craves.”

Of the discipline thus briefly sketched, we shall only say, that while presbyterians never alleged an inspired prescription for every part of its details, they consider its leading and characteristic principles to be of divine origin, or, to use the language of Calderwood, “to be taken, not out of the cistern of

men's invention, but from the pure fountains of God's holy word." At the same time, its subordinate arrangements are supported by the general rules of scripture. They are simple, well calculated to preserve order and unity, and promote the edification of the flock of Christ; and, when duly observed, they will be found as much opposed to clerical domination as to popular confusion.

Impolitic as Morton's administration was, it was not nearly so bad as that which succeeded. A party of discontented nobles having gained access to the young king, persuaded him to assume the government into his own hands. Morton resigned, and in 1578, James VI. ascended the throne, in the twelfth year of his age. This young prince had been carefully brought up under the superintendence of the countess of Mar, and the celebrated George Buchanan, who early instilled into his mind the elements of learning and the principles of religion. It must be owned that Buchanan was not exactly the man fitted to inspire his royal pupil with favourable ideas of presbytery. He had become recluse and testy in his old age; and the impression which he left on the mind of James may be gathered from what the king used long after to say of one of his old English courtiers: "That man makes me always tremble at his approach; he minds me so of my old pedagogue."* Buchanan, on his part, seems to have entertained a very low opinion of the mental capacity of his pupil; for, on being reproached for having made the king a pedant, he is said to have replied, that "it was the best he could make of him." Unfortunately, at the commencement of his reign, James fell into the

* Irving's Life of Buchanan, p. 159.

hands of two unprincipled courtiers—the one a Frenchman, whom he created duke of Lennox; and the other, captain Stewart, a notorious profligate, who afterwards became earl of Arran. These men, besides polluting his morals, filled his head with the most extravagant notions of kingly power, and the strongest prejudices against the Scottish church, the strict discipline of which, for obvious reasons, was peculiarly obnoxious to persons of such character. To the impressions then made on the vain and weak mind of James we may trace all the troubles which distracted his reign in Scotland.*

The reign of James, however, may be said to have had an auspicious commencement. On the 17th October 1579, he made a sort of triumphal entry into Edinburgh, when he was received by the inhabitants with every demonstration of loyalty. Entering at the West Port, the houses in the streets through which he passed were covered with tapestry; and various allegorical devices, in the quaint style of the times, were contrived to give *eclât* to the procession. The silver keys of the city were delivered to him by a young boy, emerging from a splendid figure of the globe, which opened as his majesty approached. Four beautiful damsels, representing the four cardinal virtues, each addressed him in a short speech; while another lady, personating religion, invited him to enter the church, where he heard a discourse. Thereafter, Bacchus, crowned with garlands, and bestriding a puncheon, welcomed the king to his own town; wine was liberally distributed to the poor; musicians, stationed at different places, greeted him with the melody of their viols; and finally, amidst the sound

* M'Crie's *Life of Melville*, i. 257.

of trumpets, and the shouts of the people, his majesty proceeded to the Abbey.*

In the following year, the king gave a proof of his attachment to the protestant cause, highly gratifying to his people, by agreeing to a solemn deed, which marks one of the most important eras in the history of the church of Scotland—we refer to the NATIONAL COVENANT. Before the reformation, several bonds or covenants had been entered into by the protestant nobility, gentry, and others, in which they pledged themselves to defend and support the true religion against its enemies; and to the confederation thus solemnly cemented may be traced much of the success which attended their struggles against popery. The same practice had been previously adopted, with the happiest effects, by the protestant princes of Germany and the protestant church of France. In Scotland, however, where the protestant had become the established religion, this solemnity assumed the peculiar form of a national deed; and our ancestors were naturally led, by similarity of circumstances, to imitate the covenants of ancient Israel, when king, priests, and people, swore mutual allegiance to the true God. In following this practice, they justly considered themselves warranted by the light of nature and the precepts of the moral law, by the promises which refer to gospel times, and by the example of holy scripture.

The national covenant of Scotland was simply an abjuration of popery, and a solemn engagement, ratified by a solemn oath, to support the protestant religion. Its immediate occasion was a dread, too well founded—a dread from which Scotland was never

* MS. in Adv. Lib.; Calderwood's MS. Hist., ad. an. 1579.

entirely freed till the revolution—of the re-introduction of popery. It was well known that Lennox was an emissary of the house of Guise, and had been sent over to prevail on the young king to embrace the Roman catholic faith. Foreseeing that James would succeed to the throne of England on the death of Elizabeth, the crafty politicians of Rome, ever watching to regain their ascendancy in that kingdom, saw the advantage of winning over the Scottish monarch. The pope himself sent him flattering letters; Jesuits and seminary priests were introduced into the country in disguise; and letters from Rome were intercepted, granting a dispensation to Roman catholics to profess the protestant faith for a time, provided they preserved a secret attachment to their own religion, and embraced every opportunity of advancing the papal interests.* Such an unprincipled conspiracy against true religion and civil liberty, a conspiracy so dangerous at all times to a country divided in religious sentiment, demanded a counter-combination equally strict and solemn, and led to the formation of the national covenant of Scotland. This was drawn up at the king's request, by his chaplain, John Craig. It consisted of an abjuration, in the most solemn and explicit terms, of the various articles of the popish system, and an engagement to adhere to and defend the reformed doctrine and discipline of the reformed church of Scotland. The covenanters further pledged themselves, under the same oath, "to defend his majesty's person and authority with our goods, bodies, and lives, in the defence of Christ's evangel, liberties of our country, ministration of justice, and punishment of iniquity,

* Life of Melville, i. 173. Note. V.

against all enemies within the realm or without." This bond, at first called "the king's confession," was sworn and subscribed by the king and his household, for example to others, on the 28th of January 1581; and afterwards, in consequence of an order in council, and an act of the general assembly, it was cheerfully subscribed by all ranks of persons through the kingdom; the ministers zealously promoting the subscription in their respective parishes.

But, while this solemn transaction had a powerful influence in quieting the public mind, and rivetting the attachment of the nation to the protestant faith, it did not prevent the royal favourites from prosecuting their obnoxious measures. On the death of Boyd, nominal archbishop of Glasgow, Lennox offered the vacant see to several ministers, on condition of their making over to him most part of its revenues by a private bargain; but they had firmness to reject the base temptation. The offer was at last accepted by Robert Montgomery, minister of Stirling, a man, says Dr. Robertson, "vain, feeble, presumptuous, and more apt to have alienated the people from an order already beloved, than to reconcile them to one which was the object of their hatred."* The consequence was, a keen altercation between the court and the general assembly, which continued for some time.

At length, in 1582, matters were brought to a crisis. The king having written a letter in favour of Montgomery, the assembly of that year answered it "discreetly and wisely, yet standing to their poynt," and were proceeding to confirm a sentence

* Robertson's History of Scotland, book vi.

of suspension against Montgomery, when he rushed out of the house; and a messenger-at-arms appeared, who charged the moderator and assembly, "under pain of rebellion and putting them to the horn," if they should direct summons against him, or in any way trouble him in his ministry, for aspiring to the see of Glasgow. This was a case of what has been called collision between the jurisdictions civil and ecclesiastical. The question was, not whether the individual ministers should obey the law of the land, but whether the church should obey the state, or, in other words, yield up her spiritual independence. The assembly did not hesitate a moment. Montgomery was summoned to their bar, to answer, among other offences, for having procured the charging of the assembly with the king's letters; and not compearing, he was laid under the awful sentence of excommunication.

The presbytery of Glasgow having assembled to carry this judgment into effect, Montgomery entered the meeting with the magistrates and an armed force, to stop their procedure. The moderator, refusing to obey the mandate, was forcibly pulled from his chair by the provost, who tore his beard, struck out one of his teeth, and committed him to the tolbooth. But still the presbytery continued sitting, and they remitted the case to the presbytery of Edinburgh, which appointed Mr. John Davidson, who had now returned to Scotland, and was settled at Liberton, to excommunicate Montgomery. The court stormed and threatened; but the intrepid young minister, at the risk of his life, which was menaced by Lennox, pronounced the sentence before a large auditory, and it was intimated on the suc-

ceeding Sabbath in Glasgow, Edinburgh, and many of the adjoining churches.*

To show the disrepute into which prelacy had fallen in Scotland, and the respect paid to a sentence of the ecclesiastical courts, we may mention, that when Montgomery shortly afterwards came to Edinburgh, the inhabitants, as soon as they heard he was in town, rose up *en masse*, and demanded that he should be expelled. Lennox attempted to shield him from their fury, by a proclamation that all men should accept of him as a good Christian and a true subject. But the Frenchman knew not the temper of the people he had to deal with. They insisted that the excommunicated archbishop should no longer pollute the town with his presence, and waited for his coming out of the council-room, where he had sought refuge, the men armed with sticks, and the women with every kind of missile. Montgomery was glad to crave the convoy of the provost out of town by a back passage, called the Kirk Wynd. In making his way through this narrow defile, he was discovered and pursued by the mob, with "Aha, false thief! mansworn thief!" and taking to his heels, he narrowly escaped, at the expense of two or three buffets on the neck, when in the act of getting out at the wicket gate of the Potterrow port. It is said that king James, who was fond of all sorts of practical jokes, even at the expense of his friends, when he heard of this rude popular ebullition, "lay down on the Inch of Perth, and laughed his fill, saying that Montgomery was a seditious loon."†

In the meantime, Melville was not idle. In a

* Row's MS. Hist., ad. an. 1582; Calderwood's Hist., ib.

† Calderwood's MS. Hist., vol. v., ad. an. 1581; MS. Notes in Adv. Lib.

sermon preached at the opening of the general assembly, he inveighed against those who had introduced what he called the *bludie gullie* of absolute power into the country, and who sought to erect a new popedom in the person of the king. Adverting to the designs of the popish powers, "This," he exclaimed, "will be called meddling with civil affairs; but these things tend to the wreck of religion, and therefore I rehearse them." Being afterwards employed with others to present a bold remonstrance to the king and council from the assembly on this subject, he displayed a spirit which reminds us of the first reformer. Arran, looking round with a threatening countenance, exclaimed, "Who dare subscribe these treasonable articles?" "WE DARE," replied Melville, and advancing to the table, he took the pen from the clerk and subscribed.*

In these contendings the ministers had hitherto received no support from the nobility; but in August 1582, a few noblemen, disgusted with the conduct of Lennox and Arran, forcibly took possession of the king's person, with the view of delivering him and the country from their disgraceful influence. The nobles seem to have treated him, while he was in their hands, very much as they would have done a spoilt child, who did not know how to use his liberty without doing mischief to himself and all around him. On attempting to escape he was seized by the master of Glamis, upon which he burst into tears. "No matter," Glamis roughly replied, with his leg planted across the door, "better that bairns weep than bearded men." This enterprise, which is known in history as "the raid of Ruthven," was ill-

* Life of Melville, i. 183.

planned; and it soon issued in the restoration of the unworthy favourites, the banishment of the lords engaged in it, and troublesome consequences to the church. The king never forgave the attempt, which he ascribed to the influence of the ministers, and which thus served to prejudice him still more than ever against the discipline of presbytery. It does not appear that the ministers had any share in the plot; but candour requires us to state, that they imprudently involved themselves, by passing an act of approval.

For about a year, while the two worthless favourites were removed from court, the church enjoyed a respite; and the faithful ministers who had been banished were, to the great joy of the people, restored to their charges. The following scene will illustrate the estimation in which these pastors were held. John Dury, one of the ministers of Edinburgh, had proved a great eye-sore to the court, and particularly to the duke of Lennox, whose open proflicacies were as openly rebuked by the unsparing preacher. Lennox became so enraged, that, not content with having summoned Dury to the council at Dalkeith house, and procured his banishment from Edinburgh, he caused him to be attacked by his French cooks, who nearly murdered him, on his way from the council, with their spits and large knives. During his banishment, the assembly ordered the presbytery of Edinburgh to keep his charge vacant; and after the raid of Ruthven, Dury was restored to his flock. The people, hearing of his approach to the city, went out in great crowds to meet him at the Nether Bow. Here, with a gravity characteristic of Scottish mobs on much

less solemn occasions, they arranged themselves in the form of a triumphal procession, in the midst of which the exiled minister was conducted along the street—the multitude, with uncovered heads and loud voices, singing the 124th psalm, in the peculiar metre, matched with its fine old music:—

“Now Israel may say, and that truly,
If that the Lord had not our cause maintained,” &c.

The sounds of the rejoicing melody reached the ears of the duke, whose house stood in the High Street; and when, on looking out of his window, he saw his old enemy thus restored in triumph, “in a French passion” he tore his beard, imprecated curses on John Dury, hastened out of town, and never returned again to Scotland.*

The scene, however, soon changed. The earl of Arran, who was really the worse of the two, was restored to favour; the nobles who had engaged in the *raid* were banished; and a cloud descended on the church. In February 1584, Melville was summoned before the privy council, to answer for certain treasonable speeches he was alleged to have uttered in a sermon, and finding that the unprincipled Arran was determined to send him to the castle of Blackness, then the bastile of Scotland, he yielded to the importunities of his friends, and escaped from the storm by retreating to Berwick.

In May following, the parliament overturned the independence of the church, by ordaining that no ecclesiastical assembly should be held without the king’s consent; that none were to presume to say a word, privately or publicly, against the proceedings

* Melville’s Diary, p. 95; MS. Notes in Adv. Lib., M. 8.

of his council; that to decline the judgment of the king and privy council, in any matter whatever, should be punished as treason; and that all ministers were to acknowledge the bishops as their ecclesiastical superiors. These acts of parliament were called by the people the *black acts*—a name they well merited, whether we consider the base character of the administration that decreed them, the malicious hostility to the liberties of the church which they betrayed, or the melancholy consequences to which they led. Suspecting that the ministers would publicly condemn these Erastian acts, orders were sent to the provost and bailies to apprehend James Lawson and Walter Balcanqual, ministers of Edinburgh, in the event of their doing so, and pull them out of the pulpit. This, however, did not deter them from denouncing the acts on the following Sabbath; and on Monday morning, when they were proclaimed at the cross, they publicly protested against them, with all due formalities, in the name of the church of Scotland. Orders were immediately issued for their apprehension; but they saved themselves by a timely flight, and, with upwards of twenty other ministers, who followed their example, took refuge in England.

Some may be surprised to hear of the liberties then used by presbyterian ministers, and perhaps disposed to blame them for introducing secular matters into the pulpit. But did not the government first set the example of intermeddling with what did not belong to them, when they claimed an erastian power over the church? Some individuals among the clergy may have used unbecoming language; but not to mention other considerations, it ought to be

remembered that, at that period, the pulpit was almost the only organ by which, in the absence of a free press, public opinion was or could be expressed, and the ecclesiastical courts were the only assemblies in the nation which possessed anything like liberty or independence. It was the preachers who first taught the people to express an opinion on the conduct of their rulers; and the assemblies of the church set the earliest example of a firm and regular opposition to the arbitrary measures of the court. But they stood upon higher ground still; for we distinctly maintain, that the ministers of Scotland would never have thus denounced the acts of government, unless these acts had infringed, directly or indirectly, on the liberties of the church and the prerogatives of the king of Zion; and when they did so, it was from no contempt of royal authority, but from conscientious obedience to that higher power, "by whom kings reign, and princes decree justice." In fact, the assembly about this time passed an act prohibiting the use of rash and irreverent speeches in the pulpit against his majesty, and deposed one of their number for having been guilty of that offence.

But the reader will be less surprised at the freedoms which the ministers took with the king, when we mention what freedoms the king used with the ministers. Nothing, indeed, pleased James better than a public disputation with the clergy. Having been in Edinburgh a little before this time, he attended worship in the High Church. Balcanqual advanced something to show that ministers had as great authority as bishops; upon which James, who plumed himself on his skill in divinity, and thought

he could handle a text better than any divine in his kingdom, rose up from his seat, and interrupting the preacher—"Mr. Walter," said he, "what scripture have ye for that assertion? I am sure ye have no scripture so to allege." The preacher said he would show his majesty that he had scripture sufficient. "If ye prove that by scripture," said the king, "I will give ye my kingdom;" adding, that it was the practice of the preachers to busy themselves about such causes in the pulpit, but he "knew their intent weil enough," and would look after them. This interlude continued upwards of a quarter of an hour, after which the king sat down and patiently heard out the sermon.

There is a similar story told of James, which is less generally known. Patrick Adamson, who had been presented to the see of St. Andrews, had gone up to England on pretence of business, and obtained episcopal consecration there in a clandestine manner. On his return to Scotland, however, he found the zeal of the assembly and the people running so high against the order, that he durst not openly avow his prelatie character. While in this predicament, the king brought him from St. Andrews to Edinburgh to preach before him in the High Church, and accompanied him with his own guard, to protect him from the people. On entering, his majesty, finding the pulpit pre-occupied by Mr. John Cowper, one of the ordinary ministers, who was just beginning to officiate, cried out, "Mr. Cowper, I will not have you preach to-day; I command you to come down out of the pulpit, and let the *bishop of St. Andrews* go up and preach to me." "Please your majesty," said Cowper, "this is the

day appointed to me to preach, and if it were your majesty's pleasure, I would fain supply the place myself." By this time the king discovered, from the surprise and commotion of the people, that he had unwittingly let out the secret of Adamson's new dignity; and, correcting himself, he replied, "I will not hear you at this time; I command you to come down, and let *Maister Patrick Adamson* go up and preach this day." "I shall obey, sir," said Cowper, coming down from the pulpit. But the whole assembly was now in uproar and confusion. The archbishop, surrounded with the king's body-guard, mounted the pulpit, and was seen bowing with great reverence to his majesty; but not a word could be heard for the outcries and lamentations of the people, who kept running out and rushing in, creating the most extraordinary noise; in the midst of which the king, coming still lower down with his titles, cried out in great wrath, with an oath, "What d—l ails the people, that they will not tarry to hear *a man* preach?"*

Patrick Adamson, who was formerly introduced to our notice,† gave great annoyance to the church about this time, and no individual in the nation was more heartily disliked. He was known to have been the chief adviser of the measures for overturning the presbyterian discipline, and he had employed his pen to traduce the characters of some of the best and noblest of the land who had opposed them. With all his learning and talents, he was of a mean-spirited and cowardly disposition. Trusting to the favour of the court, though he had been first sus-

* Prynne's *Antipathie of Lordly Prelacy to Regal Monarchy*, p. 338; Row's *MS. Hist.*, p. 80.

† P. 96

pended by the assembly, and afterwards excommunicated by the synod of Fife, he determined to show his contempt of these ecclesiastical censures, by preaching in the parish church of St. Andrews on the Sabbath after the latter sentence was pronounced. But somebody having whispered to him, as he entered the church, that a great crowd of gentlemen had gathered, and were threatening to take him out of the pulpit and hang him, he became so frightened that he fled for refuge to the steeple, and it required all the persuasions and bodily strength of the bailies to get him "ruggit out" and carried home.* At last, deserted by the king, and deprived of his annuity, he was indebted for support to Andrew Melville, to whom he had been a most bitter enemy; and falling into ill health, he earnestly petitioned the synod of Fife to be released from the sentence of excommunication. This was granted, upon which he presented to them a formal recantation of his prelatival sentiments, and died in February 1592, expressing his deep regret for the part he had acted against the church.†

The puerilities of James VI., his conceit of arbitrary power, and ridiculous passion for intermeddling with church affairs, have not escaped the notice of historians; but as an offset to these failings, some are fond of painting, in the most gloomy

* Melville's Diary, p. 164.

† Row's MS., p. 83; Life of Melville, i. 314-316. Adamson's recantation may be seen in Defoe's *Memoirs of the Church of Scotland*, p. 196. Dr. M'Crie observes, that "the circumstances in which the archbishop subscribed his recantation necessarily throw a degree of suspicion over the sincerity with which it was made, and detract from its value as a testimony in favour of presbytery. But there is not the least reason to doubt the genuineness of the document itself."

colours, the fanaticism and puritanic severity of the presbyterians. That the church courts did, in some instances, carry their notions of discipline to an excess bordering on intolerance, can hardly be denied; and considering the rude materials with which they had to deal, it is not at all surprising; but our forefathers were far from being morose ascetics, or foes to innocent amusements. Military exercises, athletic games, archery, and music, were commonly studied and practised, even by the gravest ministers.* Nor did they object to a little merriment, even in the midst of their most solemn assemblies. The commissioners of the church having met at St. Andrews to protest against the inauguration of Adamson as archbishop, one came in and told them that "there was a corbie crouping" on the roof of the church. "That's a bad omen," said David Fergusson, minister of Dunfermline; "for inauguration is from *avium garritu*; the raven is *omnimodo* a black bird, and therefore ominous; and if we read rightly what it speaks, it will be found to be *Corrupt! corrupt! corrupt!*"

David Fergusson, several of whose witty sayings are recorded by his contemporaries, and who is described as "a merrie wise man," was distinguished no less by his intelligence and integrity, than his good

* Speaking of John Dury's week-day exercises, James Melville says: "The gown was na sooner aff, and the byble out of hand fra the kirk, when on ged the corslet, and fangit was the hagbot, and to the fields." (*Diary*, p. 26.) Of himself, honest James says: "I lovit singing and playing on instruments passing weel, and wald gladly spend time where the exercise thereof was in the college; for twa or three of our condisciples played fellon weill on the virginals, and another on the lute and githorn. I had my necessars honestly enough of my father for archery and goff; but nocht a purse for catchpull and tavern." Private, or rather academic theatricals, of an innocent description, were likewise very common.

humour. He was now the oldest minister of the church, having been one of the six who were honoured to plant the reformed religion in Scotland, and he retained his vivacity to the last. King James, who resided frequently at Dunfermline, used to take great pleasure in his conversation. Having once asked him, how it happened that, of all other houses, that of the master of Gray, who was a papist, should have been shaken by an earthquake during the night? "Why," said Fergusson, "please your majesty, why should not the deevil be allowed to rock his awn bairns?" "David," said James to him one day, "why may not I have bishops in Scotland, as well as they have in England?" "Yea, sire," replied Fergusson, "ye may have bishops here; but remember, ye must make us all bishops, else will ye never content us. For, if ye set up ten or twelve louns over honest men's heads, and give them more thousands to misspend than honest men have hundreds or scores, we will never all be content. We are Paul's bishops, sire—Christ's bishops; haud us as we are." To this his majesty replied by uttering a profane oath. "Sire," said the minister, "*ban not*."* Mr. Fergusson, who was a shrewd observer of character, used to forewarn his brethren, that if James should come to the throne of England, he would not rest till he had introduced prelacy into Scotland; and his prediction was too soon realized.

* "Swear not." Row's Hist., pp. 40, 314.

CHAPTER V.

Re-establishment of the presbyterian discipline in 1592—King James and Andrew Melville—Renewal of the national covenant in 1596—Pretended riot of 17th December—Schemes for the introduction of prelacy into the church of Scotland—The Gowrie conspiracy—Robert Bruce—James at the Hampton court conference—Aberdeen assembly in 1605—Scheme of constant moderators—Extraordinary scene at Perth—Bishops admitted by the packed assembly of Glasgow in 1610—Consecration of the bishops—Archbishop Gladstones—Court of high commission.

WE need not dwell on the events which led to the re-establishment of the presbyterian discipline in the year 1592. Suffice it to say, that the signal overthrow of the Spanish armada, the invasion of which discovered the hostile intention of the popish princes of the continent—the prudent counsels of chancellor Maitland, who supplanted the king's unworthy favourites—and the blessing of God on the faithful warnings and contendings of the ministers, led to the happiest results. James was persuaded to desist from imposing upon the nation a hierarchy which none desired but himself; nay, he professed to have become a convert to presbyterianism. At one time there can be no doubt he was sensible of its advantages; for, in answer to an English divine who expressed his astonishment why the church of Scotland

was never troubled with heresy, he said, evidently in good earnest, "I'll tell you how, man. If it spring up in a parish, there is an eldership to take notice of it; if it be too strong for them, the presbytery is ready to crush it; if the heretic prove too obstinate for them, he shall find more witty heads in the synod; and if he cannot be convinced there, the general assembly, I'll warrant you, will not spare him." At a meeting of the general assembly in 1590, he pronounced a high panegyric on the church of Scotland. He "praised God that he was born in such a place as to be king in such a kirk, the purest kirk in the world. The kirk of Geneva," continued his majesty, "keepeth Pasch and Yule.* What have they for them? They have no institution. As for our neighbour kirk in England, their service is an ill-mumbled mass in English: they want nothing of the mass but the liftings. I charge you, my good people, ministers, elders, nobles, gentlemen, and barons, to stand to your purity; and I, forsooth, as long as I brook my life and crown, shall maintain the same against all deadly." The future behaviour of James furnishes an awkward commentary on this speech, and leaves us too much room to question its sincerity; but at the time that it was delivered, the assembly received it with every demonstration of joy; "there was nothing heard for a quarter of an hour, but praising God, and praying for the king."†

Shortly after this, in June 1592, the parliament formally restored presbytery, having passed an act ratifying the government of the church by sessions, presbyteries, provincial synods, and national assem-

* Easter and Christmas.

† Calderwood, Pref., iv. p. 256.

blies; the black acts were repealed; and, with the exception of the law of patronage, which was still suffered to remain in the statute-book, the jurisdiction and liberties of the church were secured, on what appeared to be the most stable footing against all future aggressions.* This act, which still continues the legal charter of the church of Scotland, has been always regarded by presbyterians as a great step in the national reformation. It was never, indeed, viewed as the basis of her ecclesiastical constitution, which is to be found in her Confession of Faith and Books of Discipline; but it was a clear civil recognition and ratification of that constitution, giving her the advantage of legal ground, sanctioning her liberties, and reducing within proper bounds the prerogatives of the crown; and had the church been remiss in exertions to obtain such a settlement, or declined to accept of it, she would certainly have acted a part equally foolish and criminal. The question was, whether presbytery or prelacy should be the established form; and a refusal on the part of the presbyterians of an establishment, crippled as it was with certain conditions from which they were resolved to seek deliverance, would have been equivalent, at that time, to surrendering their liberties into the hands of an overbearing monarch, who was quite prepared, in such a case, to place the whole country under an arbitrary hierarchy. As it was, this important act was not obtained without a struggle; the royal consent was given with reluctance; and the representatives of the church, who were waiting for it with trembling anxiety, were not relieved from their

* Act for abolishing of the acts contrair to the trew religion. Act Parl., Jac. vi., Jan. 1592.

fears till they heard it proclaimed at the cross of Edinburgh.*

The church of Scotland did not long enjoy this civil establishment in peace. She soon became involved in troubles arising from the dubious and vacillating policy of the king. Although a desperate popish plot for the extirpation of the protestant religion, concerted by the king of Spain, and headed in Scotland by the earls of Huntly, Angus, and Errol, had been discovered in the beginning of 1593—though Jesuits were flocking into the country, and murders had been committed on some eminent protestants, James, either from motives of policy, or from personal fear, because, as he used to say, “the papists were dexterous king-killers,” † could not be prevailed upon to act a decided part against the traitors. The popish lords were no sooner proclaimed rebels, than the declaration was withdrawn, and some of them were even admitted to court. Against these proceedings the clergy remonstrated with the utmost boldness, both in the pulpit and ecclesiastical assemblies. “The king,” says sir James Balfour, “was tossed like a tinnes ball betwixt the preceisse ministers and the treacherous papists. Mr. Robert Bruce told him to his face out of the pulpit, that ‘God would raise more Bothwells against him than one, gif he did not revenge God’s quarrel against the papists, before his awn particular’”

* M’Crie’s *Life of Melville*, i. 324; *Melville’s Diary*, pp. 199-201. By accepting, or rather taking the benefit of this establishment, the church cannot be viewed as homologating patronage, against which she still continued to protest, in her standards, as an unwarrantable encroachment on her liberties.

† “Just,” says Toplady, “as some Indians are said to worship the devil, for fear he should do them a mischief.” (*Works*, ii. 207.)

—referring to the insurrection of the earl of Bothwell, against whom he supposed the king to be more zealous than against his more dangerous enemies. Mr. Patrick Simpson was still more plain; for, preaching before his majesty on the words, “Where is Abel, thy brother?” he openly rebuked him for not prosecuting Huntly, the murderer of “the bonnie earl of Murray.” “Sir,” said the preacher “I assure you the Lord will ask at you, Where is the earl of Murray, your brother?” “Mr. Patrick,” replied the king before all the people, “my chalmers door was never steeked upon you; ye might have told me anything you thought in secret.” “Sir,” said Simpson, “the scandal was publick.” *

But the most remarkable exhibition of boldness on the part of the ministers was that made by Andrew Melville. In 1596, when the design of recalling the popish lords was ascertained, Melville accompanied a deputation of the clergy to Falkland, to remonstrate against a measure which they judged to be fraught with danger to the country. They were admitted to a private audience; and James Melville, whose temper was the reverse of that of his uncle, and who was employed to speak for the rest, because, as he says himself, “I could propound the matter in a mild and smooth manner, quhilk the king lyked best of,” was beginning to open the case, when he was interrupted by his majesty, who accused them, “in maist crabbit and coleric maner,” of holding seditious meetings, and of alarming the country without any reason.† This was too much for Andrew Melville, who could no longer keep silence. He took

* Balfour's *Annals of Scotland*, i. 395; Row's *MS. Hist.*, p. 100.

† James Melville's *Diary*, p. 245, Ban. edit.

the king by the sleeve, and calling him "God's sillie vassal," he proceeded to address him in the following strain—"perhaps," says his biographer, "the most singular, in point of freedom, that ever saluted royal ears, or that ever proceeded from the mouth of a loyal subject, who would have spilt his blood in defence of the person and honour of his prince:"*—"Sir," he said, "we will always humbly reverence your majesty in public; but since we have this occasion to be with your majesty in private, and since you are brought into extreme danger both of your life and crown, and along with you the country and the church of God are like to go to wreck, for not telling you the truth and giving you faithful counsel, we must discharge our duty, or else be traitors both to Christ and you. Therefore, sir, as divers times before I have told you, so now again I must tell you, there are two kings and two kingdoms in Scotland: there is king James, the head of this commonwealth, and there is Christ Jesus, the king of the church, whose subject James the sixth is, and of whose kingdom he is not a king, nor a lord, nor a head, but a member. We will yield to you your place, and give you all due obedience; but again I say, you are not the head of the church; you cannot give us that eternal life which we seek for even in this world, and you cannot deprive us of it. Permit us, then, freely to meet in the name of Christ, and to attend to the interests of that church of which you are a chief member. Sir, when you were in your swaddling clothes, Christ Jesus reigned freely in this land, in spite of all his enemies; his officers and ministers convened for the ruling and welfare of his church,

* M'Crie's *Life of Melville*, i. 391.

which was ever for your welfare, when these same enemies were seeking your destruction. And now, when there is more than extreme necessity for the continuance of that duty, will you hinder and dishearten Christ's servants and your most faithful subjects, quarrelling them for their convening, when you should rather commend and countenance them, as the godly kings and emperors did?" During the delivery of this confounding lecture, his majesty's passion, which was very high at its commencement, gradually subsided; and the ministers were dismissed with fair promises.

Different opinions will, no doubt, be formed of the conduct pursued by these undaunted presbyters. Those who are accustomed to regard the interests of truth as of paramount, because eternal, importance, will admire it as moral heroism; while others, judging by an inferior standard, may denounce it as officious insolence.* It is no doubt perfectly easy for us, at this distance of time, to sit down in safe tranquillity, and sagely to pronounce that this or the other measure was too precipitate, and that the zeal of certain persons was quite irregular. But, as it has been well remarked, "if we look backwards, and impartially consider the state of things at that period, and the different circumstances affecting it, our censure must needs be more modest; and we shall probably find ourselves inclined to admit of an apology, for that which cannot obtain our approbation. In the midst of a storm at sea, it is not surely

* Some having blamed Andrew Melville with being too *fiery*, he replied, "If you see my fire go *downward*, set your foot on it, and put it out; but if it go *upward*, let it go to its own place." "Meaning (says Livingstone) that his zeal was not for himself or outward things." (*Characteristics*, art. A. Melville.)

to be expected that things should be managed so calmly and prudently as in moderate weather and an easy voyage." * "However," says a modern historian, "from our being placed under happier circumstances, we may shrink at the broad indecent reproach which, from the pulpit, was frequently directed even against the sovereign himself; however we may be convinced that such a practice now would be useless or intolerable, we must, if we calmly investigate the period at present under review, be satisfied that we, in a great degree, owe to the intrepidity of the clergy, the liberties which we enjoy; and that, had they remained silent, the king would either have destroyed every vestige of freedom, or, what was more likely, his throne would have been subverted, and Scotland delivered into the hands of a merciless and bigoted tyrant." †

The year 1596 is memorable in the history of the church of Scotland, both for the happy revival of religion, and the lamentable manner in which it terminated. For some time its power had been visibly decaying; various corruptions had crept into the church, and numerous offences were chargeable both on ministers and people. To meet these evils, some extraordinary effort was necessary; and for this purpose the general assembly of 1593 had appointed a commission for a general visitation of the whole presbyteries throughout the realm. But the honour of giving a new impulse to the religious feelings of the nation is due to that zealous minister to whom we have repeatedly alluded, John Davidson, minister, formerly of Liberton, now of Prestonpans. Lament-

* Dr. Macqueen's Letters on Hume's History of Great Britain, p. 83.

† Dr. Cook's History of the Church of Scotland, ii. 19.

ing the evils which abounded, and the inefficacy of all the means hitherto used to correct them, he proposed, in an overture to the general assembly, that, after a solemn confession of the corruptions and offences of ministers and persons of all estates, not excepting the courts of justice and the king's household, they should renew the national covenant, "making promise before the majesty of God to amend their conduct." This proposal was cordially agreed to, and the assembly was held in the Little Church of Edinburgh, on Tuesday, 30th of March 1596. On this solemn occasion, Davidson, who was chosen to preside, preached so much to the conviction of his hearers, and, in their name, offered up a confession of their sins to heaven with such fervent emotion, that the whole assembled ministers melted into tears; and rising from their seats at his desire, and lifting up their right hands, they renewed their covenant with God, "protesting to walk more warily in their ways, and to be more diligent in their charges." This scene, which continued during three hours, was deeply affecting, beyond anything that the oldest person present had ever witnessed. As the greater part of the ministers were not present to join in the sacred action, the assembly ordained that it should be repeated in the different synods and presbyteries, and afterwards extended to congregations; and the ordinance was obeyed with an alacrity and fervour which spread from presbytery to presbytery, and from parish to parish, till all Scotland, like Judah of old, "rejoiced at the oath."*

But the satisfaction diffused by this exercise was

* Melville's Diary, 229-243; Calderwood, p. 317.

of short duration; it seemed designed, as a brief moment of sunshine, to prepare the faithful ministers of the church for the coming storm. It was remarked by many that the church never had another assembly like this during the reign of James; and Calderwood, after detailing its proceedings, closes his account with these emphatic words: "*Here end the sincere general assemblies of the kirk of Scotland.*"* On the 17th of December of the same year, when the minds of the people were in a state of high excitement from rumours of the designs of the papists, information was conveyed to the ministers that Huntly, one of the popish lords, had been all night in the palace, and that his retainers were waiting for orders to enter the capital. Alarmed at this intelligence, lord Lindsay and Mr. Bruce were appointed to wait on the king, to set before him the dangers that threatened religion. "What dangers see you?" said his majesty. Bruce mentioned their apprehensions as to Huntly. "What have ye to do with that?" said James; "and how durst you convene against my proclamation?" "We dare do more than that," said lord Lindsay; "and we will not suffer religion to be overthrown." Meanwhile, the panic had been communicated to the people, and some evil-disposed persons taking advantage of it, raised the cry, "To arms! to arms!" "These are not our weapons," said Bruce, attempting to calm the assembly, and after some confusion, which issued in no violence, the tumult was soon quelled. Such was the whole affair of the 17th of December, which the king professed to resent so highly, that he removed the court to Linlithgow, and made it

* Calderwood's (printed) History, p. 323.

a pretext for overthrowing the liberties of the church.*

The real secret of James' antipathy to presbytery was his ambition to be regarded as head of the church, a claim to which presbyterianism, from its very nature, stands directly opposed. His sentiments on this subject were discovered in two publications which appeared shortly after the event now related. The first of these, which is entitled "The True Law of Free Monarchies," is an unvarnished defence of arbitrary power, and may help us to understand the meaning of his favourite maxim, "No bishop, no king." The king, according to James, is to be "a free and absolute monarch," at liberty to do what he pleases with his people, "who," says he, "are not permitted to make any resistance but by flight, as we may see by the example of brute beasts and unreasonable creatures, among whom we never read or hear of any resistance to their parents, *except among the vipers.*" In the other treatise, "Basilicon Doron," which was addressed to his son, prince Henry, he maintains "that the office of a king is partly civil and partly ecclesiastical; that a principal part of his function consists in ruling the church; that it belongs to him to judge when preachers wander from their text; that parity among ministers is irreconcilable with monarchy, and the mother of confusion; and in short, that episcopacy should be set up, and the principal presbyterian ministers banished from the country."

With principles so opposite to the spirit of freedom and of the Scottish church, it is not surprising that James and the presbyterian ministers should

* Life of Melville, i. 407-410; Melville's Declining Age of the Church of Scotland, p. 5; Baillie's Hist. Vindication, p. 68-71.

have been perpetually at variance. The clergy, jealous of their religious rights, openly and vehemently denounced the king's proceedings from the pulpit; and the king, on the other hand, threatened all with civil pains who ventured to condemn his measures, or question his authority as supreme potentate of the church. "There would never be peace," he said, "till the marches were rid between them." Determined, however, to "rid the marches" in his own person, he summoned one of the most zealous of their number, Mr. David Black, minister of St. Andrews, to answer before the privy council, for certain treasonable speeches, as he termed them, which he had uttered in the pulpit. Black, in his own name, and in that of his brethren of the ministry, sent in a declinature to the council, denying their authority to sit as judges of his doctrine, *in the first instance*, or till he was tried by the church courts. They saw clearly that this prosecution was put out as a *feeler*, to ascertain how far the church would yield; and, to use their own language, they feared "that their yielding on this occasion would be held as an acknowledgment of his majesty's jurisdiction in matters that are mere spiritual, which might move his majesty to attempt further in the spiritual government of the house of God, and end in either a plain subverting of the spiritual judicature, or at least a confounding thereof with civil, if at any time profane and ambitious magistrates might by such dangerous beginnings, find the hedge broken down, to make a violent irruption upon the Lord's inheritance; which the Lord forbid."* This faithful

* Declinature of the King and Council's Judicature in Matters Spiritual, &c., by Mr. David Black, 18th Nov. 1596.

struggle for the liberties of the church issued, as might have been expected, in the defeat of the weaker party, and Black was banished from St. Andrews.*

It was the delight of James, however, to gain his object by policy rather than violence; and at length, by a series of stealthy, wheedling, and disgraceful manœuvres, which he dignified with the name of *kingcraft*, he succeeded in overturning the presbyterian polity. His first attempt of this nature was made shortly after the tumult to which we have referred, when he requested the assembly to appoint some of their number, with whom he might advise respecting affairs in which the church might be interested; and the assembly rashly complied, appointing fourteen ministers to act as commissioners for the church. "This," says James Melville, "was the very needle which drew in the episcopal thread." Next year, the king stole another step towards his purpose, by prevailing upon the parliament to declare that prelacy was the third estate of the kingdom, and that such pastors as he pleased to raise to the dignity of bishops should have a right to vote in parliament. The next step was to prevail on the church courts to allow their commissioners to enjoy this enviable privilege. The commissioners themselves do not seem to have been unwilling to comply; and they endeavoured to persuade their brethren that his majesty's object was merely to maintain the dignity of the ministerial office, and in nowise to bring in the popish or anglican bishops. But the more clear-sighted saw through

* The king was afterwards so far reconciled to Mr. Black, as to allow his admission into the vacant parish of Arbirlot. There he lived peaceably for six years, and died of an apoplectic stroke, when he was in the act of dispensing the communion elements to his people.

the stratagem, and protested against it. The venerable Fergusson compared it to the wooden horse by which the Greeks succeeded in taking Troy. And John Davidson, now an old man, but retaining all the spirit of his youth, cried out, "Ay, busk, busk, busk him as bonnilie as ye can, and fetch him in as fairly as you will, we see him weill enough; we see the horns of his mitre." At length, in March 1598, in an assembly summoned to meet at Dundee, for the especial convenience of the *northern ministers* whom James had bribed to come up, it was decided, by a majority of ten, that the ministry, as the third estate of the realm, should have a vote in parliament.

Still, in spite of this disgraceful compliance, it required all the craft and finesse of the king to constitute these representatives of the church *bona fide* bishops. After various conferences, and proroguing one assembly after another, an assembly, which met at Montrose in 1600, agreed to a number of *caveats* or cautions, to prevent the commissioners of the church (for by that name they were to be designated) from abusing their powers. But the strictest caveats, sanctioned by the most sacred promises, were feeble ties on an unprincipled court and perfidious churchmen. The king, conceiving that matters were now ripe for accomplishing his purpose, quietly nominated three of the ministers, David Lindsay, Peter Blackburn, and George Gladstones, to the vacant bishoprics of Ross, Aberdeen, and Caithness. And these individuals, thus nominated without the knowledge or consent of the church, sat and voted in the ensuing parliament, directly in the face of those cautions which they had so lately vowed to observe.

“It was neither the king’s intention,” says Spotswoode, “nor the mind of *the wiser sort*, that these cautions should stand in force; but to have matters peaceably ended, and *the reformation of the policy* made without noise, the king gave way to these conceits.”*

The triumph of James, however, was not complete, so long as the general assemblies continued to manage the affairs of the church; and it required other ten years of sad struggling and manœuvring before he gained a victory, of which it is hard to say whether it was more disgraceful to the victors or more disastrous to the vanquished.

About the time of which we now speak, several ministers were involved in trouble, by an event in which they had no concern, and solely through the pragmatism of the king. All who have read the History of Scotland, are acquainted with “the Gowrie Conspiracy,” an enigma in the life of James VI., which still seems to defy solution, and is involved in as much mystery as it was at the time of its occurrence. John Ruthven, earl of Gowrie, an accomplished young nobleman, had just returned from his travels on the continent, and was universally beloved by all who knew him. He was a zealous protestant, and had spent a quarter of a year at Geneva with Beza, the great reformer, who had conceived for him the highest esteem and admiration, and who could never afterwards hear his name mentioned without tears. The citizens of Perth respected him so highly, that they elected him provost in 1593, and continued him in the office during his absence.

* Spotswoode, p. 454, Calderwood, p. 402, *et seq*; Calderwood’s Course of Conformitie, *passim*.

Suddenly, in August 1600, when he had not been three months at home, the king, with a large retinue, came to Gowrie's house in Perth, saying he had been invited by the earl's brother, Alexander Ruthven. A scuffle took place, and the inhabitants, on reaching the spot, found their provost and his brother weltering in their blood. James and his friends gave out that these two noblemen had attempted to assassinate him, and that they had been killed in the act, on the king giving the alarm. This story is so full of glaring improbabilities, that one cannot help sympathizing with the opinion of Sir Thomas Moncrieff, who, meeting the king near the Bridge of Earn, on his return from Perth, and hearing his account of the affair, is said to have replied, "May it please your majesty, it is a strange story indeed, *if it be true.*"* Nothing throws so much suspicion on the king's account, as his extreme spite at any who whispered the smallest doubt of its truth. It was not enough that the ministers returned thanks to God for his deliverance; they were required to declare their full belief in his story. On his return to Edinburgh, Monday, 11th August 1600, James went, accompanied by some of the nobility, to the cross, where his chaplain, Patrick Galloway, preached to the people convened on the street a sermon, in which he endeavoured to persuade them that Gowrie and his brother had verily conspired the king's death, and were slain in the execution of the enterprise; and the king himself, rising up after him, made a harangue to the same purpose.† He next caused a narrative

* The Muses Threnodie, &c., by Cant, p. 170; Account of Gowrie Conspiracy in Scott's MSS., Adv. Lib.

† Discourse by Mr. Patrick Galloway, delivered on occasion of the Gowrie Conspiracy, August 1600. (*Ban. Misc.*, i. 141.)

of the affair to be published;* but in spite of all his efforts, the clergy as a body, and not a few of the laity, persisted in their incredulity.† They remembered, among other things, that Gowrie was a stanch friend of the protestant religion, and in favour with queen Elizabeth, while the popish lords, under whose influence the king now acted, were the deadly enemies of the house of Gowrie. Incensed at their conduct, the king summoned the ministers into his presence, and partly by arguments, partly by threats, they were all convinced or silenced, except Mr. Robert Bruce, who steadily refused to “stain the glory of his ministry” by hypocritically acknowledging himself persuaded of the guilt of Gowrie, and against whom his majesty was pleased to maintain his own veracity by the unanswerable arguments of deprivation and banishment.‡

Robert Bruce, who has been thus introduced to our notice, was a noble character, and deserves a more particular description. He was second son to the laird of Airth, from whom he inherited the estate of Kinnaird. In his youth he was educated with the view of his rising to the bench; but his conscience was so deeply impressed with an inward

* This narrative is introduced in Moyse's *Memoirs of the Affairs of Scotland*, p. 265.

† The citizens of Perth would never believe that their provost was guilty, although their minister, William Cowper, used every means to persuade them. (*Scott's MS. Records*, Adv. Libr., ad an. 1600.) In the tumult which succeeded the discovery, they surrounded the earl's house, and seeing the king standing in his hunting coat at the window, they cried out, “Give us out our provost, or the king's green coat shall pay for it!” Ruthven of Forgoun, on seeing him, cried up, “Come down, thou son of Signior Davie! thou hast slain an honest man than thyself.” (*Cald. MS. Hist.*, ad an. 1600; *Cant's History of Perth*, pp. 206, 253.)

‡ Narrative by Mr. Robert Bruce of his Troubles. A.D. 1600. (*Ban. Misc.*, p. 163.)

call to the ministry, that he could obtain no rest till he was permitted to attend the theological lectures of Andrew Melville at St. Andrews; and on one occasion, in conversation with James Melville, alluding to the conflict of mind through which he had passed, he said: "Before I throw myself again into such a torment of conscience, as I have had in resisting the call to the ministry, I would rather choose to walk through a fire of brimstone, though it were a mile in length." With all his fervency, however, such was his lowliness of mind, that, when a preacher, he could not be prevailed upon to enter upon the ministry, until he was, somewhat improperly, entrapped into it. At a sacramental occasion in Edinburgh, in the church to which he was afterwards called, one of the ministers desired him to sit beside him while serving a table; and having left him, as if for a little, he sent word to Mr. Bruce, who was still sitting opposite to the elements, that unless he continued the service, the work must necessarily be closed. The eyes of all were fixed on him—many requested him to supply the minister's place; and Bruce, thinking he had been seized with a sudden illness, proceeded with the services, in a manner which produced the most unprecedented effect on all present. Having thus commenced, he continued to discharge the duties of the ministry; and some time afterwards, when the commissioners for the church would have had him consent to be ordained by the imposition of hands, Bruce, with characteristic spirit, refused to submit to the ceremony, on the ground that it would imply that his former ministry had been unlawful. King James had

such a high opinion of him, that when he went to bring his queen home from Denmark, in 1590, he nominated him an extraordinary councillor—an office which Bruce discharged so well, that his majesty declared “he would be obligated to him all his life.”

The heroic independence and unbending rectitude of Bruce's mind were never more strikingly displayed than in his conduct in regard to the alleged Gowrie conspiracy. For his firmness in this matter he was banished to France. Having been permitted to return to his native country, he signified that his doubts were in a great measure removed, but still refused to give a public profession of his faith in the king's story, or to make the humiliating submission which was enjoined. He had never, he said, refused to do the duty of a subject; but to utter in the pulpit, under the authority of his office, anything of which he was not fully persuaded, he was not at liberty. “I have a body and some goods,” continued he; “let his majesty use them as God shall direct him. But, as to my inward peace, I pray his majesty in all humility, to suffer me to keep it. Place me where God placed me, and I shall teach as faithful and wholesome doctrine to the honour of the magistrate as God shall give me grace. But to go through the country and make proclamations here and there, will be counted either a beastly fear, or a beastly flattery; and in so doing, I should raise greater doubts, and do more harm than good to the cause, for people look not to words but to grounds.”* The

* Life of Melville, ii. 81. The king acknowledged to Mr. Bruce that he ordered Alexander Ruthven to be struck. “I grant,” said he, “that I am art and part in Master Alexander's slaughter, but it was in my

consequence of this was, that Bruce was not allowed to resume his ministerial labours in Edinburgh. We shall have occasion to meet again with this valuable servant of Christ.

The time had now come when James was to be no longer molested nor thwarted in his designs on the church by the inconvenient and uncourtly firmness of the Scottish ministers. In March 1603, on the death of Elizabeth, he succeeded to the crown of England, and was received by his new subjects with every demonstration of unbounded loyalty. He was not long seated on the English throne, when a conference was held at Hampton court, to hear the complaints of the puritans, as those good men were called who scrupled to conform to the ceremonies, and sought a reformation of the abuses of the church of England. On this occasion, surrounded with his deans, bishops, and archbishops, who breathed into his ears the music of flattery, and worshipped him as an oracle, James, like king Solomon, to whom he was fond of being compared, appeared in all his glory, giving his judgment on every question, and displaying before the astonished prelates, who kneeled every time they addressed him, his polemic powers and theological learning. Contrasting his present honours with the scenes from which he had just escaped in his native country, he began by congratulating himself that, "by the blessing of Providence, he was brought into the *promised land*, where religion was

own defence." "Why brought ye him not to justice?" said Bruce: "you should have had God before your eyes." "I had neither God nor the devil before my eyes, man!" said the king, interrupting him, "but my own defence." (*Calderwood, MS. Hist.*, ad an. 1600.)

professed in its purity; where he sat among grave, learned, and reverend men; and that now he was not, as formerly, a king without state and honour, nor in a place where order was banished, and beardless boys would brave him to his face.”* After long conferences, during which the king gave the most extraordinary exhibitions of his learning, drollery, and profaneness, he was completely thrown off his guard by the word *presbytery*, which Dr. Reynolds, a representative of the puritans, had unfortunately employed. Thinking that he aimed at a “Scotch presbytery,” James rose into a towering passion, declaring that presbytery agreed as well with monarchy as God and the devil. “Then,” said he, “Jack and Tom, and Will and Dick, shall meet, and at their pleasures censure me and my council, and all our proceedings. Then Will shall stand up and say, It must be thus: Then Dick shall reply, and say, Nay marry, but we will have it thus. And, therefore, here I must once reiterate my former speech, *Le Roy s’avisera* (the king will look after it). Stay, I pray you, for one seven years before you demand that of me; and if you then find me pursy and fat, and my wind-pipes stuffed, I will perhaps hearken to you; for let that government be once up, I am sure I shall be kept in breath; then we shall all of us have work enough, both our hands full. But, Dr. Reynolds, till you find that I grow lazy, let that alone.” Then, putting his hand to his hat, “My lords the bishops,” said his majesty, “I may thank you that these men plead for my supremacy; they think they can’t make their party good against

* Dr. Barlow’s Summary of Hampton Court Conference, p. 4.

you, but by appealing unto it. But if once you are out, and they in place, I know what would become of my supremacy; for *no bishop, no king*, as I said before." Then rising from his chair, he concluded the conference with, "If this be all they have to say, I'll make them conform, or I'll harry them out of this land, or else do worse."*

The English lords and prelates were so filled with admiration at the quickness of apprehension and dexterity in controversy shown by the king, that, as Dr. Barlow informs us, "one of them said his majesty spoke by the instinct of the Spirit of God; and the lord chancellor, as he went out, said to the dean of Chester, I have often heard that *Rex est mixta persona cum sacerdote* (that a king is partly a priest), but I never saw the truth thereof till this day!"†

In these circumstances, buoyed up with flattery by his English clergy, and placed beyond the reach of the faithful admonitions of the Scottish ministry, we need not wonder to find James prosecuting, with redoubled ardour, his scheme of reducing the church of Scotland to the English model. The bishops being now established, his next object was to procure something like an acknowledgment of them by the church, to effect which it was necessary to destroy every vestige of freedom in the constitution of her assemblies. The first attempt of this kind had been made in 1599, when the king dismissed the assembly, and summoned another to meet at Montrose in 1600, solely by virtue of his *royal prerogative*. This was entirely contrary to the esta-

* Collier, Eccl. Hist., p. 681, Hampt. Court Conference, *ut sup.*

† Dr. Barlow's Summary of the Conference, pp. 82, 84.

blishment ratified by parliament in 1592, according to which the time and place of meeting were to be nominated by the preceding assembly, with his majesty's consent.* Under various pretexts, James had infringed this rule, proroguing and altering the time of assemblies at pleasure; and at last the assembly, which should have met at Aberdeen in July 1605, was prorogued indefinitely. Now was the time to decide whether the church was to stand firm, or to yield her liberties, without a struggle, into the hands of the king. In the midst of a tempestuous winter, which kept many from coming up, a few faithful men having convened at Aberdeen, determined at least to constitute the assembly, and appoint another meeting. The king having heard that it was to be held at Aberdeen, sent instructions to Stratton of Laurieston, as commissioner, empowering him to dissolve the meeting, just because it had not been called by his majesty. The brethren present resolved to constitute before reading the communication; and John Forbes, minister of Alford, was chosen moderator. While they were reading the king's letter, a messenger-at-arms arrived, and in the king's name commanded them to dissolve, on pain of rebellion. The assembly agreed to dissolve, provided it were done in the regular way, by his majesty's commissioner naming a day and place for the next meeting. This the commissioner refused to do; the object of the king being to reserve to himself the right of calling it or not at his sovereign pleasure. The moderator accordingly, at the request of his brethren, appointed

* Row's Hist., p. 143.

the assembly to convene at the same place on the last Tuesday of September, and dissolved the meeting.*

Such is a short account of the assembly at Aberdeen, which brought so many faithful ministers into trouble. Their conduct on this occasion was marked equally by respect to the royal authority and fidelity to the great Head of the church; and it deserves the warmest approbation of every friend of religion and civil liberty. No sooner, however, was his majesty informed of their proceedings, than he transmitted orders to his privy council to proceed against the ministers as guilty of high treason. Fourteen of them having defended their conduct, were committed to various prisons; and six of the principal ministers, who were obnoxious for their fidelity, were selected for prosecution. Their names, which deserve to be recorded, were, Mr. John Forbes, the moderator; Mr. John Welch, minister at Ayr; Mr. Andrew Duncan at Crail; Mr. Robert Dury at Anstruther; Mr. John Sharp at Kilmany, and Mr. Alexander Strachan at Creigh.

At three o'clock in the morning, in the depth of winter, and through roads almost impassable, these good men were summoned to stand trial for high treason before the court of justiciary at Linlithgow, where they were met by a number of their brethren, who had come to countenance them during their trial. The prisoners made an eloquent defence. The concluding speech of Forbes, the moderator, is

* Life of Melville, ii. 114–116. History of the Reformation of Religion in Scotland, written by that faithful servant and witness of Christ, Mr. John Forbes, p. 46, *et seq.* (*MS. penes me.*) Petrie's Hist. of the Catholic Church, p. 570–580.

remarkably impressive. "My lord," said he, addressing the earl of Dunbar, when he saw they were about to pass judgment, "I adjure you before the living God, that you report to his majesty, in our names, this history out of the book of Joshua." He then related the account of the league between the Israelites and Gibeonites, and the manner in which God avenged the violation of that covenant many years afterwards on Saul and his house.* "Now, my lord, warn the king, that if such a high judgment fell upon Saul and his house for destroying them that deceived Israel, and only because of the oath of God which passed between them, what judgment will fall on his majesty, his posterity, and the whole land, if he and ye violate the great oath ye have all made to God, to stand to his truth, and to maintain the discipline of his kirk according to your powers." Then reading over to them the last sentence of the national covenant, he added, "So take this to heart, as ye will be answerable to God in that dreadful day of judgment, to which we appeal, if ye wrongously condemn us."

But what avail innocence and eloquence against the arts of corruption and the influence of terror? The earl of Dunbar had been sent down for the express purpose of securing the condemnation of the ministers; the jury were packed, and a verdict was at last obtained at midnight, finding, by a majority of three, the prisoners guilty of high treason. On hearing the verdict, the ministers embraced each other, and gave God thanks for having supported them during the trial. Arriving at Edinburgh, they were met by their wives, who were awaiting with

* Josh. ix. 3-19; 2 Sam. xxi. 2.

much anxiety the result of the trial. On being told that they had been convicted by so few votes of the crime of treason, "they joyfully," says Row, "and with masculine minds, thanked the Lord Jesus, who had given them that strength and courage to stand to their Master's cause, saying, They are evil entreated, as their Master was before them—judged and condemned under silence of night."*

It was thought that they might be set at liberty after a little confinement; but orders came down from London in November 1606, to banish them out of his majesty's dominions. They were accordingly brought from the castle of Blackness to Leith, and the ship being ready, and many of their friends having attended to see them embark, "they fell down upon their knees on the shore," says our historian, "and prayed two several times, verie ferventlie, moving all the multitude about them to tears in abundance; and after they had sung the twenty-third psalm, joyfullie taking leave of their friends and acquaintances, they passed to the ship, and after encountering a storm, were safely transported and landed in France."†

Previously to this, it was thought expedient to remove Andrew Melville and a few of the more zealous brethren out of the way. They were summoned to London, on the pretext of a consultation with the king, and they were not long there when they were prohibited from returning to Scotland. Melville, on account of a Latin epigram, which he

* Row's MS. Hist. ad an. 1606. "The people said, it was certainly a work of darkness to make Christ's faithful servants traitors. O, if the king were never in greater danger than by such men!" (*Petrie's Hist. of the Church*, p. 580.)

† Row's MS. Hist., p. 176.

wrote for his own amusement, containing some satirical reflections on the English service, was committed to the Tower of London; and, after a confinement of four years, was banished to France, where he died, at Sedan, in the year 1622.*

Meanwhile, the king, intent on bringing his favourite project to a conclusion, went a step farther, and proposed that the bishops should be appointed *constant moderators*; in other words, that they should have a right, in virtue of their office (*ad vitam aut culpam*), to preside in all meetings of presbyteries, synods, and general assemblies. This new aggression on the liberties of the church, the object of which was clearly seen through,† met with fresh opposition from the church courts, and gave rise to many unseemly and disgraceful scenes. As an illustration, we may describe the scene that took place in Perth, at the opening of the synod there, in March 1607, when Mr. William Row, a bold and zealous champion of presbytery, presided as moderator. The king had sent lord Scoon,‡ a man of violent temper and dissolute habits, to force them to accept a constant moderator. Scoon sent notice to Mr. Row, that if, in his preaching, he uttered a syllable against constant moderators, he should cause ten or twelve of his guards to discharge their pieces in his face; and during the time of sermon he stood up in a menacing posture to outbrave the preacher. But Mr. Row, no way dismayed, knowing what vices

* Life of Melville, ii. 156–319.

† They were plainly intended to prepare the way for the introduction of prelates. "The constant moderators were (as was said at that time) the little thieves, entering at the narrow windows to make open the doors to the great thieves." (*Course of Conformitie*, p. 50.)

‡ Sir David Murray, lord Scoon, and afterwards viscount Stormont.

Scoon was most addicted to, and particularly that he was a notorious glutton, drew his picture in the beginning of his discourse so much to the life, that Scoon, seeing all eyes directed towards him, was glad to sit down and cover his face. After which the minister proceeded to prove that no constant moderator ought to be tolerated in the church; but being aware that Scoon understood neither Latin nor Greek, he wisely avoided naming the constant moderator in English, giving him the learned title of *proestos ad vitam*. Sermon being ended, Scoon said to some of his attendants, "You see how I charmed the preacher from meddling with the constant moderator; but I wonder what man it was he spoke so much against by the name of *Prestos ad vitam*." When told that this was a learned phrase for *constant moderator*, Scoon's rage knew no bounds, and he resolved to prevent the synod from meeting, unless they chose for their moderator one of those who had been nominated by the king. Upon their refusing to submit, and proceeding to elect one of their number, Scoon rose in great wrath, threatened, and gave abusive names to them, and even attempted to snatch the roll of the members out of the moderator's hand; but Row, who was a man of great bodily strength, kept down the commissioner in his chair with the one hand—exhorting him to "speak with reverence and reason"—and holding the roll in the other, deliberately called over the names of the members, who chose Mr. Harrie Livingston as their moderator. "Let no man be so bold as come there!" cried Scoon, rising to intercept Livingston on his way to the moderator's chair. "Let us begin at God," said Livingston, kneeling down, when he had

got to the middle of the table, "and let us all be humbled in the name of Jesus Christ." "The d—l a Jesus is here !" exclaimed the commissioner, with shocking profaneness, overturning at the same time the table around which the ministers were kneeling. But they continued to kneel, undisturbed by his violence, till the prayer was ended and the meeting constituted. During this time, Scoon stood with his head uncovered, calling for the bailies of Perth, and commanding them to ring the common bell, and remove these rebels—an order which, though he was at that time their provost, none of them chose to execute. Baffled in this, on their adjourning, he ordered the doors of the church to be locked, so that, when the ministers returned, they were compelled to hold their synod in the open church-yard, the members kneeling down on the graves for prayer, amidst the tears of the populace, who crowded around them, deeply sympathizing with the dishonour thus offered to their church, and soon furnished them with tables and stools from their own houses.*

The extraordinary scene which we have just described, disgraceful as it was to the individual who occasioned it and to the government that employed him, reflects no discredit on the ministers of the synod of Perth, who deserve praise for their firm and yet respectful opposition to such a despotic invasion of their privileges. And it shows the impolicy of all state interference with the proper jurisdiction of the church—an interference which must issue either in the tame submission of the church, in the

* Row's Hist., p. 180; Livingstone's Characteristics, art. W. Row; Scott's MS. extracts from Kirk-session Register of Perth, vol. i. 1607.

things of God, to the authority of man, or in a collision between the civil and sacred jurisdictions, which all wise governments have, for their own sakes, carefully avoided.

It is needless to dwell on the other steps by which James succeeded in accomplishing his object. It is enough to observe, that at length, in an assembly held at Glasgow in 1610, by dint of bribery and intimidation, he obtained the consent of the church to receive the bishops as moderators of diocesan synods, and to confer on them the power of excommunicating and absolving offenders, of ordaining and deposing ministers, and visiting all the churches within their respective dioceses.

It would be absurd to consider this convention at Glasgow as a free and lawful general assembly of the church. Royal missives were sent to the presbyteries nominating the individuals whom they should choose as their representatives, and whom the bishops had previously selected as most likely to favour their designs; and the earl of Dunbar, the king's commissioner, was furnished with instructions to spare no expense, and scruple at no means, for securing that everything should be done according to the royal pleasure. The bribery practised at this assembly was shamefully notorious. Golden coins, called *angels*, were so plentifully distributed among the ministers, that it was called, by way of derision, the *angelical* assembly. Sir James Balfour informs us that Dunbar had, at a former assembly, in 1606, distributed for the same object, "amongst the most needy and clamorous of the ministry, to obtain their suffrages, forty thousand merks, to facilitate the business intended, and cause

matters go the smoothlier on.”* This was a trifle, however, when compared with the other expenses which it cost the king to establish prelacy. Mr. Row may have somewhat exaggerated the sum, but he states, that “in buying the benefices of the bishops out of the hands of the noblemen who had them, in buying votes at assemblies, in defraying all their other charges, such as coming to and living at court prelate-like, &c., the king did employ (by the confession of such as were best acquainted with, and were actors in, these businesses) above the sum of three hundred thousand pounds sterling money—a huge thing, indeed,” he adds; “but sin lying heavie on the throne, crying aloud for wrath on him and his posteritie, is infinitely sadder than three hundred thousand pounds sterling.”†

The pretext under which this disgraceful bribery was practised, was that of defraying the expenses of the poor ministers who had come from a distance. “But,” says Row, “the contrare was well knowne; for both some neare Glasgow, who voted the king’s way, got the wages of Balaam, and some gracious ministers in the north, who voted *negative*, got no gold at all.” Those who were mean enough to accept of these bribes returned home in disgrace, self-condemned and taunted by their brethren for having sold the liberties of the church, which they had solemnly pledged themselves to defend before their

* “Which *mystery of state*,” adds sir James, with great simplicity, “came thereafter to light by the view of the lord treasurer Dunbar’s accompts; a gross fault in him, which, if revealed in his lifetime, might have cost him his head, for his small prudence and little circumspection, in leaving such an item on record to be looked on by posterity.” (*Angals of Scotland*, ii. 18.)

† Row’s MS. Hist., p. 209.

departure. Altogether, it must be owned, this assembly is a blot on the escutcheon of the church of Scotland. It is true that it was neither legal in its constitution nor free in its deliberations, and on this account it was, with other assemblies held at this period, declared null and void by the famous assembly of 1638; it is true, also, that many of the faithful ministers protested against it at the time. But still, it is lamentable to think that so many ministers could be collected out of the parishes of Scotland, weak enough to yield to the threats, or base enough to take the bribes, of a despotic and domineering government, bent on overturning the liberties of the church. It was well for the bishops that the bolder spirits who had opposed their encroachments were out of the way, that the flower of the ministry had been banished out of Scotland; for, as archbishop Gladstones acknowledged, in a letter to the king announcing their success at Glasgow, "had Andrew Melville been in the country, they had never been able to get that turn accomplished."

Blinded and misled as the members of this convention were, they had no idea of sanctioning the doctrine of the divine right of episcopacy; they conceived that the form of presbyteries would still be kept up, with the bishops as moderators. No sooner, however, had the bishops gained their object at Glasgow, than three of them set off to London, and having received episcopal ordination from the English prelates, they returned to consecrate the rest, without consulting presbytery, synod, or assembly. It thus appeared that they considered themselves quite independent of the church of Scotland, and

conceived they had a right to govern their brethren, in virtue of the powers communicated to them by the bishops of another church with which she had no connection. In short, they now alleged that they had received *new light* on the subject of church government, and had discovered that prelacy was more agreeable to scripture and antiquity than presbytery. With such sentiments, they soon began to exercise the supreme jurisdiction with which they supposed themselves invested.

At the meeting of the synod of Fife, Gladstones, archbishop of St. Andrews, took the chair. It had been previously arranged by the ministers that, after protesting against this usurpation, they should march out in due order, leaving the bishop alone in possession of the chair. Mr. John Malcolm, minister of Perth, as being the oldest member, was selected as the fittest person to take the lead in this proceeding. Before entering on business, Malcolm rose up, and begged to ask by what authority, and on what grounds, the order of our kirk, established in so many famous general assemblies, and ratified by the king's acts, was altered; which, said he, "we cannot see but with grief of heart, seeing we acknowledge it to be the only true form of government of Christ's kirk." "I am astonished," said the bishop, in a high passion, "to hear such an aged man utter such foolish talk. Can you be ignorant, sir, of what was done by the general assembly in Glasgow?" Other members, however, coming forward in his support, Gladstones became calmer. "It's a strange thing, brethren," he said, "that ye are so troubled about such an indifferent matter. What matter who be moderator, provided nothing be done but to all your content-

ment?" "Ye pretend the word," said they, "but ye let us see no warrand; we know nothing ye seek but gain and preferment in this course." Upon this, the bishop, starting up, exclaimed with vehemence, "God never let me see God's face, nor be a partaker of his kingdom, if I should take this office upon me, and were not persuaded I had the warrand of the word!" The rest of the members looked to Malcolm, expecting him to walk out, as had been concerted; but as Row observes, he was "a man who had not a brow for that bargain," and he was prevailed upon to remain by Mr. William Cooper (afterwards made a bishop), who stood up and said, "Brethren, I beseech you remember that these things are not so essential points, as to rend the bowels of the kirk for them. Are these things such as to cast your ministry in hazard for them? What joy can ye have for your suffering, when ye suffer for a matter so indifferent as, who shall be moderator? who shall have the imposition of hands? Wherefore serves it, to fill the people's ears with contentious doctrine concerning the government of the kirk? Were it not much better to preach sincerely, and wait on and see what the Lord will work in these matters?" Gladstones, as we may easily conceive, highly applauded this speech; he declared that no honest man could be of another opinion; and such was the influence it had, coming as it did from one highly respected among his brethren for piety and prudence, that they carried their opposition no further.*

This is the first time in the history of the Scottish church that we have met with anything resembling the sentiments now generally known by the term

* Row's MS. Hist., ad. an, 1610; Cald. MS. Hist., vol. v. ff.

latitudinarian; and it is rather suspicious that, on this occasion, these loose principles should have been employed with success to cajole good men into a surrender of the privileges of the church, and into the adoption of a scheme which, in their judgment and conscience, they condemned. The same strain of reasoning which Cooper employed, with sincerity we doubt not, on the present occasion, has too often since that time furnished a pretext for introducing the most extensive changes into a religious profession, and overthrowing the liberties of the Christian church. If prelacy were indeed a matter of such indifference, why plead for it "the warrant of the word;" and why involve a whole church in disorder, by attempting to intrude it on a reluctant people, who were perfectly well pleased with the government they enjoyed? But, in fact, nothing can be properly called a matter of indifference which affects the honour of the great King and Head of the church; and we can conceive nothing more impertinent or disgusting than the cant of liberality, when assumed by men who, in the act of robbing the church of her dearest rights, affect to mourn over the contentions which are the fruits of their own selfish policy.

It has been observed that "James' bishops," as they were called, "were prudent and humble men, and gave great respect to all honest and deserving ministers as their brethren," very different from those that succeeded them about twenty years afterwards, whose ambition, in aiming at civil offices, induced the nobility to join with those who sought to re-establish presbytery.* This remark is so far true,

* Guthrie's Memoirs, p. 15; Scott's MSS. in Adv. Lib.

and the reasons are very obvious. James' bishops were all originally presbyterian ministers, who were well acquainted with their co-presbyters, and had not learned those imperious airs which archbishop Laud taught their successors. His majesty, too, in their selection, took care in general to fix upon those who, in addition to their servility, possessed the talents and temper best fitted for conciliating their brethren. Hence we find among them such men as William Cooper, bishop of Galloway, who, though Spotswoode accuses him of fondness for popularity, and Calderwood charges him with various delinquencies, seems, on the whole, to have been a good, peaceable, and amiable man—a sort of Leighton among the early bishops. A very different character was archbishop Gladstanes of St. Andrews, who had formerly been minister of Arbirlot, in Angus. Vain-glorious, obsequious, and time-serving, this prelate was a tool exactly to the taste of James, before whom he crouched with all the servility of an Eastern slave. “Most gracious sovereign,” he thus addressed him, “may it please your most excellent majesty, as of all vices ingratitude is most detestable, I finding myself, not only as first of that dead estaitt quhilk your majesty hath re-created, but also in my private condition so overwhelmed with your majesty's princely and magnifick benignitie, could not bot repaire to your majesty's most gracious face, that so unworthy a creature micht both see, bless, and thank *my earthly creator*. As no estaitt may say that they are your majesty's creatures as we may say, so there is none whose standing is so slippery, when your majesty shall frown, as we; for at your majesty's

nod we must either stand or fall.”* Gladstones did not long enjoy his poor dignity, having died in May 1615. According to the testimony of his contemporaries, he was a notorious glutton, and brought on himself such a miserable death, that his body required to be buried immediately after; yet “the solemnity of the funeral was made in the month of June following; and the day of his funeral being windy and stormy, blew away the pall, and marred all the honours that were carried about the empty coffin.”†

Gladstones was succeeded in the primacy by John Spotswoode, a shrewd and crafty politician, and the author of a History of the Church of Scotland, which, as has been well observed, might more properly be called “Calumnies against the Church of Scotland.” This historian, as appears from his private correspondence, was engaged in all the jesuitical plots of the government for overturning presbytery, which he had sworn to support, and could hardly be expected to give a fair account of transactions in which his own credit was so deeply implicated, and for his share in which he was afterwards excommunicated by the church which he had betrayed. His falsehoods and misrepresentations have been so completely exposed, that to appeal to

* Original letter to the king, Sept. 11, 1609; MS. in Adv. Lib., M. 6, 9.

† Row has recorded a prayer which he is said to have used after supper, too coarse and profane to be here related. And he adds an epitaph composed on him at the time, beginning thus:—

“ Here lyes beneath thir laid-stanes
The carcass of George Gladstones;
Wherever be his other half,
Lo, here ye have his epitaph.”

him *now* as an authority, on any point of history affecting the cause of presbytery, may be set down at once as a mark of blindfolded prejudice.*

It could hardly be expected that men thus intruded into the government of the church, under the wing of royal prerogative, would find it easy to gain either respect to their persons, or submission to their authority. In fact, the people despised them, and the ministers continued to preach, to rule, and to administer ordinances, as if no such persons as bishops existed. The king found it necessary, therefore, in the absence of all respect for their episcopal powers, to arm them with civil authority. For this purpose he erected *the court of high commission*, a sort of English inquisition, composed of prelates, noblemen, knights, and ministers, and possessing the combined powers of a civil and ecclesiastical tribunal. This nondescript tribunal, the proceedings of which were regulated by no fixed laws, was empowered to receive appeals from any church court, to summon before it all preachers charged with speaking against the established order of the church, and on finding them guilty, to depose and excommunicate, or to fine and imprison them. But though thus invested with powers which enabled them to set at defiance both the ecclesiastical and the civil jurisdiction, it must be admitted that, for several years, the bishops had the prudence to refrain from exercising their authority to the extent which the king desired. "They took little upon them," says a presbyterian writer, "and were very little opposed, until

* I refer here particularly to the exposure made of Spotswoode's numerous misrepresentations in Dr. M'Crie's *Life of Melville*, *passim*. See Index, vol. ii., 548.

the assembly at Perth, in the year 1618.”* During this interval, though the meetings of the general assembly were suspended, sessions, presbyteries, and synods continued to conduct business much in the usual way; and the church, if it did not enjoy prosperity, was at least suffered to remain in a sort of dead calm, till the waters were again disturbed by the tyrannical interference of the king.

* Blair's Life, p. 13.

CHAPTER VI.

The king attempts to introduce the English ceremonies—Prosecution of Mr. David Calderwood—The five articles of Perth—Black Saturday—Disputes between the ministers and people—King James and the bookseller—Ejected ministers—John Welch—Robert Bruce—Robert Blair—Patrick Simpson—Andrew Duncan—George Dunbar—John Scrimgeour—Robert Cunningham—Revivals at Stewarton and Kirk of Shotts.

IN the spring of 1617, king James paid a visit to Scotland, having, as he expressed it, “a natural and salmon-like affection to see the place of his breeding—his native and ancient kingdom.” He had been led by the bishops to believe that the people and their ministers were now quite submissive to all his wishes on the point of church government. He was determined, therefore, to try next whether they would submit, with equal ease, to the ceremonies of the English church. Among other directions for his reception, he ordered repairs to be made on the chapel of Holyrood-house; an organ was sent down, and the English carpenters began to set up statues of the twelve apostles, made of carved wood, and finely gilded. The people began to murmur—“First came the organs, now the images, and ere long we shall have the mass.” The bishops became alarmed, and,

at their solicitation, the king, though mightily offended, agreed to dispense with the gilded apostles. It was very strange, he said, that they would admit figures of "griffins, monsters, and deevils" into their churches, and refuse those of holy apostles. His other wishes, however, were gratified. A splendid altar was erected, with two closed bibles, two unlighted candles, and two empty basins. In the king's chapel, the English liturgy was ordered to be read daily; the communion was taken in a kneeling posture; and the roof of that venerable pile, for the first time since the reformation, echoed to the sounds of choristers and instrumental music.*

In the parliament, which was held soon after his arrival, James manifested his determination to have his example imitated in all the churches of the kingdom. With this view, he prevailed on them to pass an article, ordaining, "that whatsoever his majesty should determine in the external government of the church, with the advice of the bishops, and a competent number of the ministry, should have the strength of a law." In vain did the more prudent of the clergy warn him of the danger of such an enactment. "To have matters ruled as they have been in your general assemblies," said his majesty, "I will never agree; for the bishops must rule the ministers, and the king rule both."† Intelligence of this having reached the ministers, a number of them, out of several parts of the country, met and drew up a supplication to the king and parliament, in which, after protesting against any innovations in the church without the consent of a free general assembly, they pleaded that their church had at-

* Cald. MS. Hist., ad. an. 1617.

† Spotswoode, p. 531.

tained to a purity in doctrine, discipline, and worship, which had been acknowledged rather as a pattern to be followed, than as one requiring to be modelled in conformity with other churches less reformed; that, under their form of government, ratified by various acts of parliament during his reign, they had enjoyed a peace and freedom from schism, which the introduction of any novelty would miserably destroy; and that his majesty had repeatedly assured them of his determination not to impose upon them the English forms, which had allayed all their suspicions: they therefore prayed that he would not suffer the article, of which they had heard, to pass into a law, "to the grief of this poor church, that the universal hope of thousands in this land, who rejoiced at your majesty's happy arrival, may not be turned into mourning."

This faithful and respectful petition, which was signed by fifty-six names, through the cowardice of the person intrusted with it, was never formally presented; but a copy of it having come into his majesty's hands, he was highly incensed, and though he found it expedient to defer giving his sanction to the obnoxious article, he determined to wreak his displeasure on some of the most zealous of the ministers, who were summoned to appear before the high commission at St. Andrews. As a specimen of the manner in which they were treated at this court, we may select the case of Mr. David Calderwood, the author of the well-known History of the Church of Scotland, who has given an account of the whole affair in his own simple and graphic manner. "What moved you to

protest?" asked his majesty. Calderwood answered, that "it was an article concluded in parliament, which cut off our general assemblies." The king then inquired how long he had been a minister; and having been told, he said, "Hear me, Mr. David, I have been an older keeper of general assemblies than you. A general assembly serves to preserve doctrine in purity, and the church from schism, to make confessions of faith, and put up petitions to the king, in parliament. But for matters of order, rites, and things indifferent, that belongs to the king, with advice of his bishops." From this royal doctrine Mr. David tendered his humble dissent. The king then challenged the last clause of the protestation, in which the ministers declared that they must be forced rather to incur the censure of his majesty's law, than to admit any imposition not flowing from the church lawfully convened. Calderwood answered, "That whatsoever was the phrase of speech, they meant no other thing but to protest that they would give passive obedience to his majesty, but could not give active obedience unto any unlawful thing which should flow from that article." "*Active and passive obedience!*" exclaimed the king. "That is, we will rather suffer than practise," said Calderwood. "I will tell thee what obedience is, man," returned his majesty: "what the centurion said to his servants, 'To this man, Go, and he goeth; and to that man, Come, and he cometh'—that is obedience." "To suffer, sire," replied Calderwood, "is also obedience, howbeit not of that same kind; and even that obedience is not absolute, but limited, being liable to exception of a countermand from a superior power." The king here whispered something to Spotswoode,

who, turning to Calderwood, said, "His majesty saith, that if ye will not be content to be suspended *spiritually*, ye shall be suspended *corporally*." To this wretched witticism, the prisoner replied, addressing himself to his majesty, "Sire, my body is in your majesty's hands, to do with it as it pleaseth your majesty; but as long as my body is free, I will teach, notwithstanding of their sentence."

After some further altercation, Calderwood requested leave to address the bishops, which was granted. He argued with them that they had no power to suspend or deprive him in this court of high commission; "for," said he, "ye have no power in this court but by commission from his majesty; and his majesty cannot communicate that power to you which he claims not for himself." This home-thrust at the authority of the court, which neither the king nor the bishops could well parry, threw the assembly into confusion. We give the rest of the scene in Calderwood's own language:—"The bishop of Glasgow rounding in his ear, 'Ye are not a wise man; ye wot not who are your friends;' he rounded likewise to the bishop, and said, 'Wherefore brought ye me here?' Others, in the meantime, were reviling him, and some called him a proud knave. Others uttered speeches which he could not take up for confusion of voices. Others were not ashamed to shake his shoulders and dunch him on the neck, he being yet upon his knees." The king demanded, in the meantime, if he would abstain from preaching for a certain time, in case he should command him by his royal authority, as from himself; and Calderwood, thinking he still referred to the sentence of the commission, and being disturbed by

the shaking, tugging, and cross-questioning, replied, "I am not minded to obey." Upon which he was hurried off, and committed to lord Scoon, to be imprisoned for declining the king's authority. Scoon, who seems to have taken a malicious pleasure in performing such services, was conducting his prisoner along the street, when some one asked, "Where away with that man, my lord?" "First to the tolbooth, and then to the gallows," said Scoon. Mr. Calderwood having thus discovered his mistake, took the earliest opportunity of assuring his majesty that it was not *his* authority, but that of the commission, which he had disowned; but it was not deemed safe to allow so bold a champion of presbytery to stand in the way; so he was banished out of the country. Lord Cranston earnestly pleaded that the period of his banishment might be delayed on account of the tempestuous season of the year. This petition was refused. "If he be drowned in the seas," said the king, "he may thank God he hath escaped a worse death." *

Irritated at the unexpected opposition to his measures, James vented his rage on the bishops, whom he called "dolts and deceivers," because they had made him believe they had managed matters so well that his presence was all that was wanted to settle them. In the month of November 1617, he convoked a meeting of the clergy, for it could not be called a general assembly, at St. Andrews, and there proposed to them five articles of conformity with the

* Calderwood's Hist., p. 682; The Bannatyne Miscellany, p. 205. Calderwood's fate was neither to be hanged nor drowned, he being, soon after the re-establishment of presbytery in 1638, appointed minister of Pencaitland, and dying peaceably at Jedburgh, 29th October 1650.

English church, which having been next year agreed upon at another meeting in Perth, are generally known by the name of *The five articles of Perth*. As these articles occasioned much disorder in the church, and led to very serious consequences, we may here enumerate them, and subjoin a few remarks to explain the opposition made to them by the church of Scotland. They were as follows: 1. Kneeling at the communion. 2. The observance of certain holidays, viz., Christmas, Good Friday, Easter, Ascension, and Pentecost. 3. Episcopal confirmation. 4. Private baptism. 5. Private communicating.

These articles may appear to some as too insignificant to require or to justify the resistance which was made to them by the faithful portion of the church. But the slightest innovations are important in religion; and by several of these articles, as might easily have been shown, the most sacred doctrines of Christianity were involved in danger. We can only hint at a few of the leading objections against them. The first article, viz., that of kneeling at the communion, was particularly obnoxious, from its tendency to countenance the popish doctrine of the adoration of the host. Although this ceremony is retained by the English church as expressive of veneration rather than worship, the Scottish ministers were justly apprehensive that the adoration addressed at first to an invisible Being, might soon be transferred to the visible symbol, and again degenerate into an idolatrous worship of the elements. They maintained, besides, that the practice of sitting at a communion-table, in token of their fellowship, which was the common mode of all the other reformed churches, was much more agreeable to the

example of the first supper, than that of receiving the elements individually from the hands of a priest, while kneeling at an altar.

Against the holidays they objected, that the nativity of Christ was of an uncertain date; that the institution of Christmas was an imitation of the idolatrous Saturnalia of the Romans, to coincide with which it was changed by the Roman church to the 25th of December; that Easter and Pentecost were revivals of the ceremonial law of the Jews; that the anniversary days of the birth, crucifixion, and resurrection of Christ, were no more consecrated by these events, than were the forms of the manger in which he was born, of the cross on which he suffered, and of the sepulchre in which he was buried; that they tended, wherever introduced, to diminish respect for the only day which God had made holy, viz., the Christian Sabbath; and that those who kept them came under the charge of "observing days, and months, and years," a practice expressly condemned in scripture.

The third article, respecting confirmation, was objected to chiefly from having no foundation in scripture, and because it implied a confirmation of baptism, as if this ordinance, administered by presbyters, were not complete without the imposition of hands by a bishop.

The fourth and fifth articles, viz., the private administration of the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper, our fathers condemned as inconsistent with the nature and design of these institutions, both of which are church ordinances, and therefore to be administered only when the church is assembled, and as leading to superstitious notions

of the virtue of the mere outward signs. Though important ordinances, they denied them to be essential to salvation; and to insist on either baptism or the Lord's supper being administered privately, seemed to them not only inconsistent with scripture, but fitted to revive those popish doctrines, against which humanity and reason alike protested—that all unbaptized infants are excluded from bliss, and that the reception of the consecrated host on a death-bed is essential to salvation.

But while our fathers had good reasons for condemning these ceremonies, as unwarranted and superstitious, there was another source of alarm which will be better understood by many in our own day than any we have now mentioned. They knew well, that the moment these articles received the sanction of the civil power, the bishops would forcibly impose them on all both ministers and people, who, whatever might be their private opinions, would be obliged to practise them under the severest penalties.* Need we wonder, then, that they should have strenuously protested against this direct imposition on conscience—this tyrannical encroachment, which left them no alternative between surrendering their Christian liberty, or incurring the consequences of disobeying the law of the land?

Such, then, were the celebrated articles which James sought to intrude on the Scottish church. The assembly which met at St. Andrews, much to his chagrin, postponed the consideration of them; and on the 25th of August 1618, the last assembly which met in James' reign, and for twenty years afterwards, was held in Perth, for the purpose of

* Gillespie's *Dispute against English-Popish Ceremonies*, p. 4-7.

extorting something like a sanction to the obnoxious ceremonies. "This assembly," says Row, "was not made up of commissioners sent from presbyteries, but of bishops, doctors, deans, and such ministers as were the bishops' followers; then the king had his commissioners, and there were sundry noblemen and gentlemen who were written for by the king and bishops, to keep the said assembly; and sundrie commissioners, sent from presbyteries, were not called upon, nor got they any vote there, the moderator knowing what they would say." "There was set in the Little Kirk," says Calderwood, "a long table, and forms at every side for noblemen, barons, burgesses, bishops, and doctors, and at the head of it a cross table, with chairs for his majesty's commissioners and the moderator. The ministers were left to stand behind, as if their place and part had been only to behold. But this apparently was done of policy, that they might carry some majesty on their part, to dash simple ministers."*

In an assembly thus constituted, it need not surprise us that a majority was found willing to vote with the court. Archbishop Spotswoode, unable to answer the reasonings of those who condemned the articles, burst out in a passion with these words, which were remembered long after,—“This matter shall not be carried either by arguments or votes: if it were but we bishops, with his majesty's commissioner, we will conclude the matter, and see who dare withstand it!”† Having told them he would send up the names of all who voted against them to the king, the question was put, “Will you consent

* Row's Hist., an. ad. 1618; Calderwood, p. 698.

† Blair's Life, p. 15.

to the articles, or disobey the king?" The articles were carried by a considerable majority; but a minority of *forty-five*, even out of this packed assembly whom no promises could allure or menaces deter from voting according to their consciences, saved the Scottish church from absolute degradation.

When this mock assembly rose, the bishops prepared to enforce the obnoxious rites. In a few weeks they were ratified by the privy council, and in July 1621 they obtained the sanction of parliament. It was remarked, that at the very instant when the marquis of Hamilton, the commissioner, rose to touch this act with the royal sceptre, in token of ratification, a black thunder-cloud which had for some time hung over the city, enveloping it in extraordinary darkness, burst, as if immediately over the parliament-house, into a tremendous storm; three brilliant flashes of lightning, following in quick succession, and rendered more frightful by the surrounding darkness, darted in at the great window, and seemed to strike directly in the face of the commissioner; this was succeeded by terrible peals of thunder, and such a tempest of rain and hail, that it was with great difficulty, and after long delay, the members were able to reach their homes. On this account, as well as of the sad work transacted on it, this day got the name, which it long retained among the people, of *Black Saturday*.*

Our fathers who lived under the realizing belief of a superintending Providence, directing with the same hand the elements of nature and the events of time, were accustomed to see and hear God in every thing. These appearances, in the excited state of

* Row's Hist., ad. an. 1621; Calderwood, p. 783.

the public mind, were considered as ominous of the wrath of Heaven at this flagrant breach of national engagements, and betokening approaching judgments. Whatever may be thought of the warrantableness of thus interpreting the appearances of nature—appearances which, it must be allowed, are naturally fitted, and must therefore be intended, to inspire us with awe of the divine Majesty—the fears to which they gave birth, in the present instance, certainly do more honour to the piety of our presbyterian ancestors, than the raillery which Spotswoode puts into the mouths of others, who said, “it was to be taken as an approbation from heaven, likening the same to the thunders and lightnings at the giving of the law of Moses!”*

The bishops had now obtained all that seemed necessary to their complete ascendancy. They had procured the sanction of what they called a general assembly; and the parliament had ratified their articles, which were now the law of the land. All that remained was, that the law should be obeyed. But this was not so easily accomplished. When Christmas day, 1618, arrived, the churches of Edinburgh were opened, and some of the time-serving ministers, in obedience to instructions from the king, observed the festival. But, notwithstanding all the exertions made by the bishops and magistrates, few or none could be prevailed upon to attend; the people flocked out of town, or went about their ordinary affairs; the kirks were almost deserted, and in some of them the dogs were playing in the middle of the floor. Mr. Patrick Galloway, one of

* Spotswoode, p. 542.

the ministers, a vain-glorious man, who had offered to sign the protestation with his blood, and who was formerly so zealous, says Calderwood, that, "he took it ill if he were asked to eat a Christmas pie"—now appeared in the pulpit, fretting and fuming because he was not followed in his present course, and denouncing famine of the word, deafness, blindness, and leanness upon all those who came not to his Christmas sermon. Another of the ministers, Mr. William Struthers, inveighed from the pulpit against the people of Edinburgh, in a strain of the most violent vituperation. And yet this man had been formerly so zealous against the bishops, that he could scarce give a comment upon the chapter after meals without a stroke at them; and on one occasion it is recorded of him, that being in Glasgow, and happening to observe bishop Spotswoode coming down the street, he went into a shop, and fell into a swoon. On administering a little aquavitæ, he recovered; and being asked what accident had befallen him, "What!" he exclaimed, "saw ye not *the character of the beast coming?*"*

These trifling anecdotes carry their own moral with them. He has studied history and observed life to little purpose, who has not discovered that those who make the most flaming professions when professions may be made without danger, or who show an overstrained strictness about matters of really small moment, are generally the first to yield when the trial of principle arrives, and turn out the most bitter opponents of their brethren who, though they made less noise about their faithfulness, prove nevertheless faithful in the evil day.

* Calderwood's MS. History, ad. an. 1618.

Of all the articles of Perth, there was none that proved more obnoxious than that of being compelled to kneel at the sacrament. The people are, in general, more ready to take alarm at trifling innovations in the service where they are required to take an active share, than even in matters that more nearly concern the truth as it is in Jesus; but this ceremony was so identified in their minds with the idolatry of Rome—so clearly derived from worshipping the body of Christ in the host—that they shrunk from it with horror. In some churches, we are told, they went out, and left the minister alone; in others, the simpler sort, when the officiating clergyman insisted on their kneeling, cried out, “The danger, if any be, light upon your soul, and not upon ours!” The elders and deacons refused to officiate, and the ministers were reduced to a sad dilemma. This led, as might have been expected, to unseemly altercations, in which the dignity of the clerical character suffered from rude collision with the common people. One of the deacons, named John Mein, seems to have given them more than ordinary provocation, by the steadiness with which he stood to his point, and answered their arguments.

“What will ye say,” said Mr. Galloway, “if I prove kneeling out of the Scripture? Ps. xcv. 6, ‘O come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord our maker.’ Heard ye me on that text last Sabbath?”

“Yes, sir,” answered the deacon, “and thought ye proved nothing. If you can prove kneeling out of Scripture, I will be content to go with you. But ye allege only the 95th psalm, which was 1600 years before the institution.”

"May not that content you which has contented the kirk of Scotland?" asked Struthers.

"Sir, that is a point of papistry," said John, "to believe as the kirk believes."

"What will you say to this, then," cried Gallo-way; "the kirk has concluded it, and the king and council has confirmed it. Would you set yourself above both kirk and king?"

"Sir," replied John, smiling, "ye were wont to say to us langsyne, 'Thus saith the Lord;' but now ye change your tune, and say, 'Thus saith the kirk and the king.'"*

King James, whose ill humour seems to have increased with age, was particularly incensed at the people of Edinburgh for their opposition to his favourite ceremonies. One James Cathkin, a bookseller of that city, was apprehended in London, in 1619, on the charge of having circulated Calderwood's treatise against the Perth articles, and was brought before his majesty; when the following characteristic conversation took place. His majesty asked him where he dwelt? He replied, "If it please your majestie, I was born in Edinburgh, and dwells in Edinburgh."

"What religion are you of?" asked the king.

"Of the religion your majestie professes," said Cathkin.

This was too much for his majesty, who exclaimed, with a tremendous oath, "You are none of my religion! you are a recusant—you go not to the church!"

"If it please your majestie, I go to the church," said Cathkin.

* Calderwood's MS. Hist., ad an. 1619.

“ Were you there on Christmas day?”

“ No.”

“ And why were you not there?”

Cathkin replied, that holidays had been “ casten out of the kirk;” and ventured to hint, that “ it had been good if our ministers had acquainted the session of the kirk before they had brought in these novelties upon us.”

“ Plagues on you and the session of your kirk baith!” said the king. “ When I was in Scotland, I kepted Yoole and Pasch* in spite of all your hearts; and,” added he, pointing to Cathkin, who was on his knees before him, “ see, my lords, these people will kneel to me, and will not kneel to God. I never can get order of thir people of Edinburgh. I forgave them the seventeenth day!” (alluding to 17th Dec. 1596.) “ Ye are worse than Turks and Jews.” And so saying, he wound up with an execration against the “ soules and bodies” of the whole population of Edinburgh, in language too gross for repetition.*

The history of the church during the subsequent years of James’ reign, presents little that is interesting or important. We may therefore devote the remaining portion of this chapter to a few sketches of the most eminent of those ministers who flourished and suffered during this barren portion of our ecclesiastical annals.

The reader will recollect the six ministers who were tried for high treason at Linlithgow, and banished, for having held an assembly at Aberdeen

* Christmas and Easter.

† The Bannatyne Miscellany, pp. 197-206.

in 1605. Among these worthy sufferers in the cause of Christ, and his royal prerogative as king of Zion, the most remarkable was Mr. John Welch. He was by birth a gentleman, his father being laird of Collieston, an estate in Nithsdale; and he was settled as minister, first at Selkirk, and afterwards at Ayr. The accounts given of his piety, and of his perseverance and success in prayer, are such as almost to exceed belief in this lukewarm age; but the incidents recorded in illustration of these belong properly to the province of the biographer. The following, however, may be quoted as being, if not a better attested, at least a more easily credited narrative. In France, the country of his exile, Mr. Welch applied himself with such assiduity to the study of the language of the country, that he was able, in the course of fourteen weeks, to preach in French, and was chosen minister to a protestant congregation in the town of St. Jean D'Angely. War having broken out between Louis XIII. and his protestant subjects, this town was besieged by the king in person. On this occasion, Welch not only exhorted the inhabitants to a vigorous resistance, but mounted the walls, and rendered his personal assistance to the garrison. The king was at length admitted to the town on a treaty; and being displeased that Welch preached during his residence in it, he sent the duke D'Espernon with a company of soldiers to take him from the pulpit. When the preacher saw the duke enter the church, he ordered his hearers to make room for the marshal of France, and desired him to sit down and hear the word of God. He spoke with such an air of authority, that the duke involuntarily took a seat and listened to the sermon

with great gravity and attention. He then brought Welch to the king, who asked him how he durst preach there, since it was contrary to the laws of the kingdom for any of the reformed to preach in places where the court resided. "Sir," replied Welch, "if your majesty knew what I preached, you would not only come and hear it yourself, but make all France to hear it; for I preach not as those men you use to hear. First, I preach that you must be saved by the merits of Jesus Christ, and not your own; and I am sure your conscience tells you that your good works will never merit heaven. Next, I preach that as you are king of France, there is no man on earth above you. But these men whom you hear subject you to the pope of Rome, which I will never do." Pleased with this reply, Louis said to him, "*He bien, vous serez mon ministre*—Very good, you shall be my minister;" and addressing him by the title of "father," assured him of his protection. He was as good as his word; for, in 1621, when the town was again besieged, he gave directions to take care of his minister, and he was safely conveyed with his family to Rochelle.

Having lost his health, and the physicians having informed him that his only chance of recovery was to return to his native country, Mr. Welch ventured, in the year 1622, to come to London; and his wife, who was a daughter of the celebrated John Knox, having obtained access to James, petitioned him to allow her husband to return to Scotland. On this occasion, the following singular colloquy took place: The king asked her who was her father. She replied, "John Knox." "Knox and Welch!" exclaimed he, "the devil never made such a match as that." "It's

right like, sir," said Mrs. Welch; "for we never speired* his advice." He then asked her how many children John Knox had left, and if they were lads or lasses. She said, three, and they were *all lasses*. "God be thanked!" cried the king, lifting up both his hands, "for an they had been *three lads*, I had never *bruiked*† my three kingdoms in peace!" She again urged her request that he would give her husband his native air. "Give him his native air," replied the king, "give him the devil!" "Give that to your hungry courtiers," said she, offended at his profaneness. He told her, at last, that if she would persuade her husband to submit to the bishops, he would allow him to return to Scotland. Mrs. Welch, lifting up her apron, and holding it towards the king, replied, in the true spirit of her father, "Please your majesty, I'd rather kep‡ his head there!" Welch languished a very short time in London, having been released by death, in May 1622.§

The reader will recollect the noble part acted by Robert Bruce in the case of the Gowrie conspiracy. Will it be believed that this high-minded gentleman, and worthy minister of Christ, was persecuted till his death, by the mean jealousy of the bishops, who set spies on his conduct, committed him to various prisons, and procured orders to drag him like a common felon, from one corner of the kingdom to another? From the descriptions of contemporaries, it appears that Bruce's appearance and manner corresponded with the dignity of his mind. "He had," says Livingstone, who was well acquainted with him, "a very majestick countenance, and whenever he did

* Asked.

† Enjoyed.

‡ Catch.

§ M'Crie's Life of Knox, vol. ii. pp. 271-274.

speak in public or private, yea, when he read the word, I thought it had such a force as I never discerned in any other man. He was, both in public and private, very short in prayer with others; but then, every sentence was *like a bolt shot up to heaven*; yea, I have heard him say that he wearied when others continued long in prayer; but being alone, he spent much of his time in that exercise. It was his custom, after the first sermon, to retire by himself for prayer; and one day, some noblemen who had far to ride, sent the beadle to learn if there was any appearance of his coming. The man returned and told them, 'I think he shall not come this day, for I overheard him always say to another, that *he will not go, and cannot go, without him*, and I do not hear the other answer him a word at all.'* It is needless to say who "the other" person was, whose silence astonished the ignorant beadle.

The manner of Mr. Bruce's death, which took place in August 1631, was beautifully in accordance with the tenor of his life. On the morning of his departure, his illness consisting chiefly in the debility of old age, he arose to breakfast with his family, and having eaten an egg, he desired his daughter to bring him another. Instantly, however, assuming an air of deep meditation, he said, "Hold, daughter, my Master calls me!" and having asked for the family bible, and finding that his sight was gone, he said, "Cast up to me the 8th chapter of the epistle to the Romans, and place my finger on these words, 'I am persuaded that neither death nor life shall be able to separate me from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.'" "Now," he said, "is my

* Livingstone's Characteristics, art. *R. Bruce*.

finger upon the place?" and being told it was, he added, "Then God be with you, my children; I have breakfasted with you, and shall sup with my Lord Jesus Christ this night!" And so saying the good man expired.

The memoirs of Mr. Robert Blair, who was first settled at Bangor in Ireland, and latterly at St. Andrews, exhibit the history of a mind deeply exercised about eternal things, and may be regarded as a fair specimen of the warm and manly piety, chastened by knowledge, and rendered firm and consistent by the admixture of public principle, which distinguished many in these times. The most singular feature in the religious history of these good men, was their wonderful success in obtaining answers to their prayers for temporal favours. We will introduce one or two instances of these "returns of prayers," as they were termed, with an observation made by Mr. Blair, after recounting an extraordinary incident in his own life: "If any one who may read these things shall be offended, seeing revelations have now ceased, and that we are to keep close to the will of God revealed in the scriptures; I answer for their satisfaction, that if any creature, be he angel or man, add anything to that perfect rule of faith and manners, or reveal anything contrary thereto, let him be accursed. This we leave to papists and sectaries. But, in the meantime, it ought not to be denied, that the Lord is pleased sometimes to reveal to his servants, especially in a suffering condition, some events concerning themselves, and that part of the church of God in which they live."* There is much included in these words, "especially in a suf-

* Memoirs of the Life of Mr. Robert Blair, p. 78.

fering condition." We know not what it is to suffer for Christ, and therefore know not "the consolations of Christ" which *abound* under these sufferings. It is only when the Master sees his servants sick and exhausted, and ready to perish in his service, that he brings forth such cordials to recruit their spirits.

Mr. Patrick Simpson was first ordained minister of Cramond, but was afterwards transported to Stirling, where he continued till his death. He was a very learned man, and was the author of a history of the church, and of some of her ancient councils. On being blamed by one of his friends for wasting so much time in the study of pagan writers, he replied that his purpose was "to adorn the house of God with these Egyptian jewels." In 1601, his wife, who was a woman of singular piety, fell sick, and, under her indisposition, was assailed by the most fearful temptations, supposing herself to be delivered up unto Satan. Having fallen into one of those fits of despair on Sabbath morning, when Mr. Simpson was going out to preach, he was exceedingly distressed, and betook himself to prayer; and on his returning to the company present, he assured them that "they who had been witnesses to that sad hour, should yet see the adversary of her soul meet with a shameful defeat." Her distraction continued till the Tuesday morning preceding her death, when, on coming from his retirement, he said to the attendants, "Be of good comfort, for I am sure that ere ten o'clock of the day, that brand shall be plucked out of the fire." He then prayed at her bed-side, and upon his alluding to Jacob wrestling with God, she sat up in the bed, drew the curtains aside, and said, "Thou art this day a Jacob, who hast wrestled

and prevailed; and now God has made good his word which he spake this morning to you, for I am plucked out of the hands of Satan, and he shall have no power over me." Shortly after this she expired, uttering only the language of comfort, hope, and joy.* Patrick Simpson took an active share in the struggles of the church against the encroachments of the bishops; he nobly refused a bishoprick when offered to him; and he died, almost broken-hearted, when the Perth articles were agreed upon, in March 1618.

The next instance partakes almost of the nature of romance. Andrew Duncan, minister of Crail, in Fife, was distinguished by his sufferings in defence of the presbyterian polity. He was another of those who were banished for having attended the assembly at Aberdeen; and on his return in 1619, he was again brought into trouble, being summoned before the high commission court of the bishops for opposing the Perth articles. On this occasion he boldly admonished his judges of their sin and danger. "Pity yourselves," he said, in his protest, "for the Lord's sake; lose not your own souls, I beseech you, for Esau's pottage; remember Balaam, who was cast away by the deceit of the wages of unrighteousness; forget not how miserable Judas was, who lost himself for a trifle of money, which never did him good. Better be pined to death by hunger, than, for a little pittance of the earth, perish for ever, and never be recovered, so long as the days of heaven shall last and the years of eternity shall endure." Spotswoode, the archbishop, on glancing at the faithful document, tossed it from him in disdain; another of the

* Livingstone's Charact., art. *P. Simpson*; Wodrow's *Analecta*.

bishops, picking it up, said, "He calls us Esaus, Balaams, and Judases." "Not so," said Mr. Duncan; read again; beware that you be not like them." He had soon an opportunity of exemplifying his doctrine; for having been banished to Berwick, to live "upon his own charges," he was almost literally "pined to death by hunger." With a numerous family, and a wife far advanced in pregnancy, he was reduced to the utmost hardship. One night in particular, when the children were crying for bread, and there was none in the house to give them, the poor exiled minister occupied himself alternately in praying to God, in pacifying his children, and comforting his partner. He exhorted her to wait patiently on God, who was now trying them, but would undoubtedly provide for them, though he should rain down bread from heaven. They had neither friend nor acquaintance in that place to whom they could make their case known. Early next morning, however, a man brought them a sackful of provisions, and went away without telling them whence it came, though entreated to do so. Shortly after this, during the night, when the good man knew not where to apply for aid to his suffering wife, a lady came to their door, and having sent the servant back with her horse, to return for her at a certain time, requested permission to act the part of servant and nurse. She continued to do so till her services were no longer required, and on her departure presented the astonished and grateful couple with a box containing linen, cordials, and money; but, notwithstanding all their entreaties, would neither tell who she was nor whence she came.

This practice of banishing ministers from one part

of the country to another, must, particularly in those cases where they had large families, have been very grievous and oppressive; yet they seem to have endured it with great cheerfulness. One of them, Mr. George Dunbar, minister of Ayr, who had a number of young children, was twice thrust out by the bishops. At that time there were few such things as coaches or carriages in the country; and it may amuse some of my readers to learn that the children on these occasions had to be transported in *creels* placed on horseback. When the bishop's messenger came the second time to Mr. Dunbar's house to turn them out, one of his little daughters, who had no doubt suffered by the former transportation, cried out to the man, "What! and is Pharaoh's heart hardened still?" All that her father said, on hearing the summons, was, "Margaret," addressing his wife, "prepare the creels again."*

Some are apt to imagine that all the ministers of a certain period and persuasion were possessed of the same character; and sourness of temper has been supposed to have been the characteristic feature of presbyterians. A minuter acquaintance with them would correct such an impression; for we meet with all different sorts of temperament among them—melancholy and lively—grave and facetious—rude and gentle. In short, they resembled each other only in their piety and fidelity. Robert Boyd of Trochrig was a man of profound learning, sagacity, and integrity, and had he not been driven about by the bishops from one place to another, he might have proved an ornament to his native country. He was successively principal of Glasgow and Edinburgh

* Livingstone's Characteristics.

universities, and minister of Paisley; but in none of these situations was he allowed to remain in peace; and from the last place, to the disgrace of Paisley, he was driven by a rascally mob with stones and dirt, so that he retired in disgust to his property of Trochrig. He was a man of grave and severe character, but he tells us that his brother, whose untimely loss he deplored, was constantly laughing and joking.

John Scrimgeour, minister of Kinghorn, who stood boldly out against episcopacy, was, as Livingstone tells us, "a man rude-like in his clothing, in his behaviour, and some of his expressions, but of a tender loving heart." Though a great scholar, he used to say, he wished that all books were burnt except the bible and a few notes upon it. His temper was so irritable, that, like Jonah, he could not restrain himself from expressing his displeasure even before God. A favourite daughter being supposed near death, he used in secret prayer the following extraordinary language: "Thou knowest, O Lord, I have been serving thee in the uprightness of my heart according to my measure, and thou seest that I take pleasure in this child; and cannot I obtain such a thing as this at thy hand?" with other expressions of a similar nature, which, though the prayer was granted, he said "he would not utter again for all the world." On his death-bed, his body was racked by a very painful disorder; and in the interval of one of the attacks, he said to Mr. Livingstone: "John, I have been a *rude stunkard man* all my days, and now by this pain the Lord is *dantoning* (subduing) me, to make me as a lamb before he take me home to himself."

A very different character from this, though essentially like, was Robert Cunningham, minister of Holywood in Ireland. "He was," says the same writer, "the one man, to my discerning, of all that ever I saw, that resembled most the meekness of Jesus Christ in his whole carriage; and was so far revered by all, even the most wicked, that he was often troubled with that scripture, 'Woe to you when all men speak well of you.'" The sweetness of his disposition endeared him so much to his brethren, that they could not endure to hear of any one harming him; and Mr. Blair on learning that the bishop of Down intended to depose him, told the prelate, with solemn earnestness: "Sir, you may do to me and some others as you please, but if ever you meddle with Mr. Cunningham, your cup will be full!"

The death-bed scene of this amiable man corresponded with the gentleness of his nature. Having been thrust out of his charge in Ireland, he came over to his native country, but never held up his head again. "The bishop," he said, "has taken away my ministry from me, and I may say my life also, for my ministry is dearer to me than my life."* During his sickness he was heard to say, "I see Christ standing over death's head, and saying, Deal warily with my servant; loose now this pin, now that, for this tabernacle must be set up again." A little before his departure, March 1637, his wife sitting by his bed-side, with her hand clasped in his, he commended to God first his congregation, then his

* George Wishart, the eminent martyr, regarded his suspension from preaching in the same light: "He grew pensive; and being asked the reason, said, 'What do I differ from a *dead man*, but that I eat and drink?'" (*Clark's Gen. Martyr.*, p. 563.)

brethren in the ministry, and his children, and concluded with, "And last, O Lord, I recommend to thee this gentlewoman, who is no more my wife!" Thus saying, he softly disengaged his own hand, and gently moved that of his wife a little away from him. At this affecting farewell, she burst into tears, and in the act of attempting to allay her grief, he fell asleep in Jesus.*

The general state of religion in Scotland during the earlier part of the seventeenth century, was very far from being satisfactory. In the large towns; which had enjoyed the labours of a faithful ministry, the good fruits were apparent in the holy lives of many; but, in consequence of the niggardly provision made for the support of a settled ministry, many parishes in the country were left, in a great measure, desolate; the place of ministers being often supplied by readers, who, for a small salary, were engaged to read portions of the scriptures, and the prayers which were contained in the Book of Common Order, prefixed to the Psalms in metre. It may be easily imagined, that this class of men, little raised above the peasantry from which they were chosen, without learning, without authority, would ill supply the place of a regular and well-trained ministry. The general assembly, long before, were deeply affected with this state of spiritual destitution, and many were the plans proposed and the efforts made to supply the country with good and faithful pastors. But, in the absence of all funds for their support, this was found impracticable; and on the entrance of prelacy, the case became still worse, two-thirds of the benefices

* Livingstone's Characteristics.

formerly appropriated to the maintenance of the ministry being claimed by the bishops to support the dignity of their station. Under the rule of these prelates, who were too much taken up with their own projects of worldly ambition to pay much regard to the interests of religion, the pulpits were filled for the most part with a time-serving clergy, and the people allowed to sink into spiritual apathy.

At this period, therefore, the state of religion in Scotland was very peculiar; some spots being favoured with a faithful ministry, and richly cultivated, while others were left in their native sterility; and the character of the people corresponded, being something like the prophet's figs, "the good, very good, and the evil, very evil." In some parishes, where the gospel was preached, piety flourished to an uncommon degree, and discipline was exercised with a rigour which, in the present day, would be considered intolerable. In other places, the people remained destitute of all privileges and all restraint, in a state of ignorance, superstition, and crime, very little better than that which existed in the days of popery. This accounts for the apparent contradictions which the records of the time may be found to contain. The country, in fact, was but partially civilized, and the ministers of religion had to contend, not only with the ordinary fruits of human depravity, but with strange forms of evil, engendered and fostered in the shades of that long dark night from which they had lately escaped.

The most singular, certainly, of all the crimes which characterized this age, and which has occasioned most speculation, was that of *witchcraft*. The prosecutions instituted, both before civil and eccle-

siastical tribunals, against those who were charged with this offence, exhibit a very strange picture of society. It does not come within our present province to enter upon this subject; nor is it necessary to discuss the policy of those laws which were enacted in the reign of James VI. against this crime, and under the operation of which so many unhappy individuals were subjected to a cruel death. We know that the unholy arts of necromancy, sorcery, and divination, practised among the heathen nations of antiquity, were prohibited by the law of Moses, under the penalty of death, as involving the worship of false gods, or treason against Heaven; and that witchcraft is among the sins condemned in the New Testament. Whether the "god of this world" is now permitted to exercise his power in the same manner as then over the souls and bodies of men, may admit of question; but it cannot be denied, that even the pretence or profession of holding intercourse with evil spirits, and practising diabolical arts, amounts to a crime of no light consideration, either in a moral or civil point of view; and it is certain that at this period of our history, there were individuals who avowedly acted as the agents of Satan, and practised on the credulity and the superstitious fears of their neighbours, to an extent of which we can form no conception, often employing their arts to the vilest of purposes. It is melancholy to think that so many wretched creatures should have fallen victims to these delusions; but while we condemn the cruelties exercised in their discovery and punishment, we should bear in mind the peculiar state of society at the time. It is unfair to single out the clergy as eminently chargeable with these prose-

cutions, in which they only participated with persons of all ranks—with the king on the throne, the judges on the bench, and the most learned men of the age. And it is quite preposterous to confine the charge to the presbyterian ministers; for the trial and burning of witches went on with even superior activity and cruelty during the reign of prelacy, both before and after the restoration.

In the midst of all this corruption, however, and in spite of the banishment of so many faithful ministers, the gospel flourished in some places to an unprecedented degree. The persecutors might remove the labourers from the field, but they could not destroy the fruits of their labours. A spirit of grace and supplication was poured out on their bereaved flocks, and they were wonderfully enabled in patience to possess their souls, so that no sufferings could induce them to abandon their principles, or resign themselves to despair. “Nay,” says the author of memoirs in reference to this period, “when the darkness was at the greatest, and when, to the eye of reason, there seemed scarcely a ray of hope, the presbyterians declared that utter desolation shall yet be to the haters of the virgin daughter of Scotland. The bride shall yet sing, as in the days of her youth. The dry olive tree shall again bud, and the dry dead bones shall live.” Many faithful ministers, such as Dickson, Bruce, Livingstone, and Henderson, had great boldness given them to preach the gospel, with the connivance, or in spite of the mandates of the bishops; and two remarkable *revivals* took place, one at Stewarton in 1625, and the other at the Kirk of Shotts in 1630, which deserve to be recorded.

The parish of Stewarton, at the period referred

to, was favoured with an excellent minister, Mr. Castlclaw; but it is remarkable that the principal instrument of the revival was not he, but the minister of the neighbouring parish of Irvine, Mr. Dickson. This good man had been formerly professor of moral philosophy in the university of Glasgow, and was settled in Irvine in 1618. His zeal against the Perth articles exposed him to the rage of the bishops, who summoned him before the high commission court, and after subjecting him to the most insulting treatment, banished him to Turriff, in the north of Scotland. To all this Dickson meekly replied, "The will of the Lord be done; though ye cast me off, the Lord will take me up. Send me whither you will, I hope my master will go with me, as being his own weak servant." By the intercession of the earl of Eglinton, whose countess, though reared in her youth at court, was an ornament to her Christian profession, and exerted all her influence for the promotion of religion and the protection of its faithful ministers, the pastor was restored to his beloved people. After his return, in 1623, his ministry was singularly honoured of God for the conviction and conversion of multitudes. Crowds, under spiritual concern, came from all the parishes round about Irvine, and many settled in the neighbourhood, to enjoy his ministrations. Thus encouraged, Mr. Dickson began a weekly lecture on the Mondays, being the market-day in Irvine, when the town was thronged with people from the country. The people from the parish of Stewarton, especially, availed themselves of this privilege, to which they were strongly encouraged by their own minister. The impression produced upon them was very extraordinary. In a

large hall within the manse there would often be assembled upwards of a hundred persons, under deep impressions of religion, waiting to converse with the minister, whose public discourses had led them to discover the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and to cry, "What shall we do to be saved?" And it was by means of these week-day discourses and meetings that the famous Stewarton revival, or *the Stewarton sickness*, as it was derisively called, began, and spread afterwards from house to house for many miles along the valley in Ayrshire through which the Stewarton water runs. Extravagances, as might be expected, took place during this period of excitement, from which some took occasion to bring reproach on the whole proceeding;* but these were checked and condemned by Mr. Dickson and others, who conversed with them; and the sacred character of the work was attested by the solid, serious, and practical piety which distinguished the converts. Many who had been well known as most abandoned characters, and mockers at religion, being drawn by curiosity to attend these lectures, afterwards became completely changed, showing by their life and conversation that the Lord had "opened their hearts to attend to the things spoken" by his servant.†

The impulse given by this revival continued from 1625 to 1630, when it was followed by a similar effusion of the influences of the Spirit in another part of the country. This took place at the Kirk of Shotts. And here also it is observable that the honour of originating the revival was reserved not

* "The ignorant and proud secure livers called them the *daft* people of Stewarton." (*Life of Robert Blair*, p. 18.)

† Gillies' Historical Collections, vol. i. p. 306.

to the minister of the parish, though a good man, but to one of those faithful servants who suffered for their nonconformity to the innovations of the time; the Lord thus signally accomplishing his word, "Them that honour me, I will honour." The circumstances which led to this revival were the following: Some ladies of rank who had occasion to travel that way, had received civilities at different times from Mr. Hance, the minister of Shotts; and on one occasion, when their carriage broke down near the manse, he kindly invited them to alight, and remain till it was repaired. During their stay they noticed that the house was much dilapidated, and in return for his attentions, they got a new manse erected for him in a better situation. Mr. Hance, on receiving so substantial a favour, waited on the ladies to thank them, and wished to know if there was anything he could do to testify his gratitude. It is pleasing to know that at this time, as well as afterwards, the noblest of the daughters of Scotland distinguished themselves by their zeal in the cause of religion. These ladies loved the gospel, and the persecuted ministers who were contending for its purity. They, therefore, gladly seized the opportunity of asking Mr. Hance to invite such of them as they named to assist at the sacrament, that they might enjoy the benefit of their ministrations, and afford to others an opportunity of partaking in a privilege at this time rarely enjoyed. The minister gladly consented; and information of it spreading abroad, an immense concourse of people gathered from all parts to attend the dispensation of the ordinance, which was fixed for Sabbath the 20th of June 1630.

Among the ministers invited on this occasion, at

the request of these ladies, were the noble and venerable champion, Robert Bruce of Kinnaird, who was still able to preach with his wonted majesty and authority, and John Livingstone, chaplain to the countess of Wigton, who was afterwards settled some time in Ireland, but who at present was only a preacher, and about twenty-seven years of age. Much of the spirit of light and love was imparted during the services of the communion Sabbath; and so filled were the communicants with the joy and peace which they had experienced, that, instead of retiring to rest, they joined together in small companies, and spent the whole night in devotional exercises.

It had not been usual before this time to have service on the Monday after the dispensation of the Lord's supper; but God had vouchsafed so much of his gracious presence on the preceding days of this solemnity, that they knew not how to part on this Monday without thanksgiving and praise. John Livingstone was with difficulty prevailed on to preach the sermon. In the memoirs of his life, written by himself, he gives the following memorandum in reference to this discourse: "The only day in all my life wherein I found most of the presence of God in preaching was on a Monday after the communion, preaching in the church-yard of Shotts, June 21, 1630. The night before I had been with some Christians, who spent the night in prayer and conference. When I was alone in the fields, about eight or nine of the clock in the morning, before we were to go to sermon, there came such a misgiving of spirit upon me, considering my unworthiness and weakness, and the multitude and expectation of the

people, that I was consulting with myself to have stolen away somewhere and declined that day's preaching, but that I thought I durst not so far distrust God, and so went to sermon, and got good assistance about an hour and a-half upon the points which I had meditated on: 'Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.' (Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 26.) And in the end, offering to close with some words of exhortation, I was led on about an hour's time, in a strain of exhortation and warning, with such liberty and melting of heart, as I never had the like in public all my lifetime."*

To this sermon, under the blessing of God, no less than five hundred people ascribed their conversion. And in gratitude for such a remarkable token of the divine countenance on this day, the church of Scotland has ever since devoted a part of the Monday after a communion Sabbath to the duty of public thanksgiving.

Some remarkable incidents occurred on that Monday, one of which, as illustrating the striking effect produced by Mr. Livingstone's discourse, may be now related. "Three young gentlemen belonging to Glasgow had made an appointment to go to Edinburgh to attend some public amusements. Having alighted at Shotts to take breakfast, one of their number proposed to go and hear sermon—probably more from curiosity than any other motive; and

* Life of Mr. John Livingstone, p. 14.

for greater expedition, they arranged to come away at the end of the sermon, before the last prayer. But the power of God accompanying the sermon was so felt by them, that they could not go away till all was over. When they returned to take their horses, they called for some refreshment before they mounted; but when it was set upon the table, they all looked to one another, none of them daring to touch it till a blessing was asked; and as they were not accustomed formerly to attend to such things, one of them at last said, 'I think we should ask a blessing to our drink.' The others assented at once to this proposal, and put it on one of their number to do it, to which he readily consented. And when they had done, they could not rise till another had returned thanks. They went on their way more sedately than they used to do, but none of them mentioned their inward concern to the others, only now and then one would say, 'Was it not a great sermon we heard?' another would answer, 'I never heard the like of it.' They went to Edinburgh, but instead of waiting on diversions or company, they kept their rooms the greater part of the time they were there, which was only about two days, when they were all quite weary of Edinburgh, and proposed to return home. Upon the way home they did not discover the state of their minds to one another; and after arriving in Glasgow they kept themselves very much retired, coming seldom out. At last, one of them made a visit to his friend, and declared to him what God had done for him at the Kirk of Shotts. The other frankly owned the concern that he had been brought under at the same time; and both of them proceeding to

the third, and finding him in the same state of mind, they all three agreed to have a fellowship-meeting. They continued to maintain a practice suitable to their profession for the remainder of their lives, and became eminently useful in their day and generation.”*

From this, and other well-attested instances, it appears that the revival on this occasion was not characterized by those excesses which have brought discredit on similar scenes in our own country and elsewhere. The word of God sank deep into the hearts of the hearers, forcing them to retire, like the stricken deer, into solitude, there to weep and mourn till the dart was extracted by the hand that had launched it, and the balm of consolation was poured into the bleeding wound. It was some time before the modesty of the converts would permit them to own the change wrought upon them, till, like the spring of living water, which cannot be controlled or concealed, the grace of God evinced its power by bursting from the once “stony heart,” and pouring itself forth in the pure, peaceful, and fruitful stream of a holy conversation. And it is worthy of remark, that then, as it has often been, both before and since, the Most High was visibly preparing his Church by a copious effusion of his Holy Spirit, manifested in the general revival of religion, for the struggles which awaited her, in asserting his righteous claims against the powers of this world, and carrying into effect the noble enterprises which were before her. We now enter on the history of what has been termed the second reformation.

* Gillies' Hist. Collections, vol. i., pp. 308-311.

CHAPTER VII.

Accession of Charles I.—His visit to Scotland—Laud's Service Book—Its reception in Scotland—The covenant renewed—State of parties—Alexander Henderson—Earls Loudoun and Rothes—Hamilton's visit to Scotland—Glasgow assembly 1638—Presbyterian form of worship.

CHARLES I. succeeded to the throne of England in March 1625. Naturally reserved, imperious, and obstinate, he had imbibed from his father, James VI., the most extravagant notions of monarchical authority. He was taught to hold, as a point of religious rather than political faith, that the king, in his sole person, was superior to all law, civil or ecclesiastical. Whatever might be his private virtues (and they have been greatly exaggerated), there can be no doubt that his conduct as a prince, from the commencement of his reign, was violent and unconstitutional. Yielding himself to the influence of his queen, a popish princess, and to the guidance of high church counsellors, who flattered his love of arbitrary power, Charles soon began that course of opposition to parliament and people which ended in his ruin.

In June 1633, he paid a visit to Scotland, to receive the crown of that ancient kingdom. Our

sagacious countrymen were not long in discovering the real character of their new monarch. The first thing that excited their suspicions was the open profanation of the Lord's-day in the royal household. Laud had by this time re-published King James' infamous *Book of Sports*, afterwards ratified by Charles, for allowing of pastimes on the Lord's-day, "which," says Whitelocke, "gave great distaste to many others as well as those who were usually called puritans."* It was, therefore, with feelings of no ordinary alarm that the inhabitants of Edinburgh witnessed the example given by the court, when they heard the sacred quietude and peaceful devotions of their Sabbath disturbed, for the first time, by the sounds of unholy mirth and boisterous revelry.†

Charles was crowned "with such rites, ceremonies, and forms, as made many good Christians admire," says Row, "that such things should be used in this reformed kirk." During this ceremony, Laud openly insulted one of the bishops, who, less ostentatious than the rest, did not appear in full episcopal costume. Thrusting him from the left hand of the king, he said, "How dare you, sir, appear in this place without your canonicals?" On the following Sabbath, the king heard sermon in the High Church, and when the ordinary reader was about to commence the psalm, one of the bishops came down from the king's loft, and after some angry words, pulled him from the desk, substituting two English choristers in their vestments, who, with the assistance of the bishops, performed the service after the English form.‡ Thereafter Guthry, bishop of Moray, mounted the pulpit, and addressed the king with

* Whitelocke's Memorials, pp. 17-19. † Row's Hist., p. 279. ‡ Ibid.

such fulsome panegyric, that his majesty, fond as he was of such incense, blushed for shame.

In the parliament which met immediately after, the king began his campaign as the champion of prelacy, by proposing an act empowering him to regulate ecclesiastical vestments. From the specimen which they had seen at the coronation, the parliament were startled at the motion; and when the act was read for their approval, lord Melville, an aged nobleman, rose and said, "I have sworn, sire, with your father and the whole kingdom, to the Confession of Faith, in which these innovations were solemnly abjured." Others of the noblemen began to make similar objections, upon which Charles pulled out a list from his pocket, and said, "Gentlemen, I have all your names here, and I'll know who will do me service, and who not this day." Notwithstanding this illegal and disgraceful threat, the votes carried against his majesty; the clerk, however, suborned for the purpose, declared that they were in his favour; and when the earl of Rothes contradicted this, the king declared that the report of the clerk must be held decisive, unless Rothes chose to challenge his veracity at the bar of the house, and, on failing in his proof, to suffer the penalty of *death*. The nobleman, disgusted at this conduct, or unwilling to expose his majesty, declined the perilous task, and the articles were ratified as the deed of parliament.*

The gratulations with which Charles had been received on his arrival were now exchanged for very different symptoms. On expressing his astonish-

* Burnet's History of his Own Times, i. 24, 25; Row's Hist., pp. 250, 252; Rushworth, ii. 183.

ment at this change of the public feeling, he was honestly told the reason by lord Loudoun: "Sire, the people of Scotland will obey you in everything with the utmost cheerfulness, provided you do not touch their religion and conscience."

Prelacy had now been established in Scotland for thirty years, and yet the antipathy against it was becoming every day more intense. The conduct of the prelates, and of the clergy, especially that of the younger portion of them whom they had obtruded on the flocks of the banished ministers, did not tend to abate this feeling. These novices, who had neither piety nor learning to recommend them, disdained to mingle with the people; they aped the manners of the higher classes, and even among these assumed a haughtiness of demeanour which filled our nobles with indignation. An incident, bearing on this point, is related by sir James Balfour. Charles was extremely desirous that the primate of Scotland (Spotswoode) should have precedence of the chancellor; "which," says sir James, "the lord chancellor Hay, a gallant stout man, would never condescend to, nor ever suffer him to have place of him, do what he could." Once and again the king attempted to gain this point, so anxious was he to humble the nobility and exalt the clergy; and on his coronation, he sent sir James to the doughty old chancellor, with a request that he would "but only for that day give place to the archbishop." Lord Hay's reply was in the true spirit of a Scottish chief. "He was ready to lay down his office at his majesty's feet, but since it was his royal will that he should enjoy it with all the privileges of the same, never a stoled priest in Scotland

should set a foot before him, so long as his blood was hot.”* The prosecution of lord Balmerino, indicted for high treason, for having attempted to use the privilege of petition, viewed in connection with similar proceedings in England, tended greatly to alarm the Scots nobility. In addition to all this, a spirit of repentance seems to have been poured out on the people, leading many seriously to reflect on the share they had in procuring the calamities now impending over the church. They began to contrast the days they had enjoyed under the pure ministration of the gospel with those in which they now lived; and their faithful pastors now banished far away, with the worthless hirelings who had been intruded upon them. The result was, deep compunction for their contempt of former privileges and breach of solemn engagements, on account of which they now considered themselves to be justly punished by Heaven.

Thus it will be perceived, that about this period everything was prepared for an explosion; and yet this was the time fixed for introducing fresh innovations of a character still more obnoxious than all the preceding. No change had as yet been attempted on the form of public prayer, which was still conducted, externally at least, as it had been practised since the reformation. A collection of prayers, prefixed to the psalms in metre, usually called John Knox's liturgy, had been long in use. It was originally meant as a help to weak ministers, at a period when it was difficult to find well-qualified persons to supply the pulpits; and the prayers in this book were still used in the churches by the

* That is, so long as he lived.

readers, who were employed to read the scriptures to the people before the ministers began the proper service of the day, and in some places on the morning and evening of every week-day. In the pretended assembly of 1616, held at Aberdeen, it was ordained that a new liturgy, or book of common-prayer, should be formed for the use of the church of Scotland; and the task of preparing it is said to have fallen on Cowper, bishop of Galloway.* But this project was not carried into effect—probably from their knowledge of the aversion of the Scots to fixed forms of prayer. The people did not question the lawfulness of set forms, but their necessity; they had been long habituated to hear them read, though not by their *ministers*; and they considered it altogether at variance with scripture, with the practice of antiquity, and with the very nature of prayer, that the church should be shackled and bound to an invariable formulary in this part of divine worship. To the English liturgy they objected, not only on the ground that it restricted the minister to a prescribed form of words, but because it recognised a number of superstitious practices which the scripture condemned, and which not only the puritans, but many of the best and most enlightened members of the church of England, had long desired to see reformed. But the English liturgy, undesired as it was, would not have excited such a sensation as that which Laud attempted to force on the people of Scotland. For our especial benefit, it pleased his grace of Canterbury to draw up a new service-book of his own, much more nearly

* *Booke of Universal Kirke*, p. 595, Pet. Ed.; Scott's MSS., in Adv. Lib.

resembling the popish breviary; and in various points, particularly in the communion-service, borrowing the very words of the mass-book.

To prepare the way for the introduction of this *Anglo-popish* service, as it was called, a book of canons was sent down, for the regulation of the clergy; next came orders for every minister to procure two copies of Laud's liturgy, for the use of his church, on pain of deprivation—even before the book had been seen by any of them; and lastly, when the minds of the whole nation had been wrought up to a state of alarm, by reports of a design to reintroduce the popish worship, down came the long-expected service-book, with orders from the king and council that it should be read in all the churches.

Brief as was the space during which the ministers were permitted to examine the contents of this book, they had time sufficient to discover its character, and warn the people against it. The pulpits resounded with accusations against its orthodoxy, and denunciations of the tyranny of the bishops in imposing it on the once free reformed church of Scotland. In the midst of these preparations, arrived the fatal day appointed for commehcing the use of the service-book—the 23d of July 1637.

On the morning of this Sabbath, one Henderson, a reader in the High Church of St. Giles, and a great favourite with the people, read the usual prayers about eight o'clock; and when he had ended, he said, with tears in his eyes: "Adieu, good people, for I think this is the last time of my reading prayers in this place." The dean of Edinburgh was appointed to perform the service, after the form of the obnoxious liturgy. An immense crowd had assem-

bled. At the stated hour the dean was seen issuing from the vestry, clad in his surplice, and he passed through the crowd to the reading desk, the people gazing as they would at a show. No sooner, however, had he begun to read, than his voice was drowned in a tumultuous clamour, raised chiefly by persons of the lower classes, denouncing the innovation. An old woman, named Janet Geddes, who kept a green-stall in the High Street, no longer able to conceal her indignation, cried out, "Villain, dost thou say mass at my lug!" and, with these words, launched at the dean's head the stool on which she had been sitting. Others followed her example, and the confusion became universal. The service was interrupted, and the women, whose zeal on this occasion was most conspicuous, rushed to the desk in wild disorder. The dean threw off his surplice and fled, to escape being torn in pieces. The bishop of Edinburgh then ascended the pulpit, and endeavoured to allay the ferment; but his address only inflamed them the more. He was answered by a volley of sticks, stones, and other missiles, with cries of "A pope! a pope!—antichrist!—pull him down!—stone him!" and on returning in his coach, had he not been protected by the magistrates, he might have fallen a victim to the fury of the mob—a martyr to Laud's liturgy! *

* In an old manuscript lately printed (*Appendix to Rothes' Relation*, p. 193, Ban. edit.) there is a satirical account of this scene, differing in a few particulars from that given above, and adding several others. According to this account, the epithets bestowed on the clerical functionaries by the crowd were much more distinguished for their strength than their delicacy. "The dean, Mr. James Hanna, was mightily upbraided. Some cried, 'Ill-hanged thief! if at that time when thou wentest to court thou hadst been weel hanged, thou hadst not been here to be a pest to God's church this day.' A certain woman cried, 'Fy, if

Nothing can be more ridiculous than the attempts made at the time by the prelatie clergy, and which have been revived of late by their advocates, to magnify this incidental tumult into a regularly organized conspiracy. The terror into which the bishops were thrown, and the disgrace they felt at being defeated by a handful of women, naturally led them to exaggerate the whole affair; and they may have really believed, perhaps, what some absurdly asserted, that the authors of the tumult were men disguised in women's clothes. We need not wonder at this, when we consider that even Baillie, a good presbyterian, whom we shall frequently have occasion to quote, says, in his letters at this period, "I think our people are possessed with a bloody devil, far above anything that can be imagined." But Baillie soon found he was mistaken: at that time he had not made up his mind on the question, and indeed seems to have been incapable of it from pure bodily fear. "The Lord save my poor soul!" exclaims this good, but rather weak-minded man, "for as moderate as I have been, and resolving, in spite of the devil and the world, by God's grace so to remain to death—for as well as I have been beloved hitherto by all who has known me, yet *I think I may be killed*, and my house burnt upon my head!"* But indeed there is not the vestige of a proof that it was premeditated, or even foreseen, by any class

I could get the thropple out of him!" One did cast a stool at him, intending to have given him a ticket of remembrance; but *jouking* (jerk-ing down his head) became his safeguard at that time." There is little doubt that one folding stool was made use of for the purpose here expressed; and if the missile employed was anything like what is commonly called "Jenny Geddes's stool," preserved in the Antiquarian Society's museum, it was well for the dean that he had learned to *jouk*.

* Baillie's Letters and Journals (Bannatyne edit., 4to.) i. 24.

of people; and none will assert it who have read the accounts transmitted by those who were on the spot, and who had no temptation to conceal the truth.

This tumult, simple as it was in its commencement, proved the death-blow of Laud's liturgy. Though at first confined to the humbler orders, and the result, as we have seen, not of any premeditated scheme, but of an impulse given to long suppressed feelings, the quarrel was soon taken up by the higher classes. The infatuated conduct of the prelates (the younger part of them especially) to enforce the obnoxious mandate of the court, roused the whole country to follow the example set by Edinburgh. Petitions and remonstrances poured into the privy council. New riots, in which the gentry began to participate, took place, and it was found absolutely necessary to suspend the use of the liturgy. In Glasgow, similar indignation was excited by an attempt to impose this book; and there, as in Edinburgh, the women seem to have borne the principal share. One Mr. William Annan, minister of Ayr, who preached in defence of the service-book, had well-nigh fallen a victim to their fury. During the day he was pursued with threats of vengeance; and on venturing out at night, he was beset by some hundreds of ladies, chiefly the wives of honest burghesses, who attacked him with "fists, staves, and peats, but no stones;" tore his coat, ruff, and hat to pieces, and after beating him soundly, allowed him to go home. His humiliation, however, was not yet complete; for next morning, on mounting his horse, the animal, startled by the mob which began to collect around him, unhappily fell and rolled over

him, "in very foule myre;" and the discomfited divine, covered with mud, made his escape out of Glasgow, amidst the derisive shouts of the populace.*

About this time the excitement in Edinburgh was so great that many noblemen and gentlemen, commissioners from various places, with their retainers, and great crowds of people from all quarters, came up to town, waiting with the utmost anxiety the king's answer to a supplication for the suppression of the service-book. Had that answer been conciliatory, had any concessions been made at this critical juncture, it is probable that prelacy might have survived, and a civil war been prevented. But the fatal infatuation of Charles prevailed. A new proclamation arrived, enjoining strict obedience to the canons, and instant reception of the service-book, condemning all the proceedings of the supplicants, as they were called, and discharging all their public meetings, under pain of treason. The supplicants, apprized of this measure, which, had it been tamely submitted to, would, in all probability, have extinguished every spark of freedom in the country, resolved to proceed in a body to the Scottish privy council, which was to meet at Stirling on the 20th of February 1638, and present, in name of the kirk and kingdom, a protest against the proclamation as soon as it was made.

This was deemed the legal course for securing their liberties, and the manner in which they went about it shows their zeal and determination. The earls of Traquair and Roxburgh, after in vain attempting to dissuade them from their purpose, resolved to steal a march on them, by secretly starting from Edinburgh

* Baillie's Letters, i. 21.

at two o'clock on Monday morning, the day before the meeting of council, expecting to have the proclamation ratified and published ere the supplicants were aware of their departure. In this, however, they were disappointed. Traquair's servant having stepped into an ale-house before leaving Edinburgh, to fortify himself for the cold ride of a February morning by a glass of "Scotch twopenny," incautiously let out the secret of his journey to some of his boon companions, and among them was a servant of the lord Lindsay, who immediately communicated the news to his master. Lindsay lost not a moment in sounding the alarm among his friends, and he himself, with the earl of Home, mounting their horses at four o'clock the same morning, overtook the two earls at the Torwood, passed them by taking a turn round the wood, and reached Stirling an hour before them. In course of time, Traquair and Roxburgh rode leisurely up the streets of that ancient burgh, and proceeded, with the aid of some other councillors, to pass the proclamation, when, to their mortification and astonishment, the two lords of the covenant appeared, and, in all due form of law, protested against it.*

On the news of this spirited protest reaching London, the court was greatly incensed, and none more so than Laud, who was supposed to have had the chief hand in urging the king to these extreme measures, and who on this occasion betrayed his wounded pride in a very ridiculous manner. On his way to the council-table, he was met by the celebrated Archie Armstrong, the king's fool, who said to him, "Wha's fule now? Doth not your grace hear the

* Rothes' Relation, p. 63; Baillie, i. 33; Guthrie's Memoirs, p. 33.

news from Striveling about the liturgy?" Laud was silly enough to complain of this jest as an insult; and it was ordained, by order of council, that "Archibald Armstrong, for certain scandalous words of a high nature, spoken by him, against his grace the lord archbishop of Canterbury, should have his coat pulled over his head, and be banished the court." Some one having met Archie, after the execution of this sentence, attired in black, asked him what had become of his fool's coat. "O," said he, "my lord of Canterbury hath taken it from me, because either he or some of the Scotch bishops may have use of it for themselves; but he hath given me a black coat for it, to cover my knavery withal."*

The same promptitude and decision in protesting against the proclamation was manifested at Edinburgh; and at length the council, apprehensive of danger from such large masses of people collected in town, agreed that if they would disperse the crowd, the commissioners might appoint some of their number to represent the rest, who should remain and attend to the public interests. To this the commissioners agreed, and erected four *tables*, as they were called—one for the nobility, another for the barons, a third for the boroughs, and a fourth for the church. But before separating to return to their homes, the commissioners, considering the critical state both of church and nation, agreed to renew the national covenant, with a bond applicable to the present conjuncture, binding themselves "to adhere to and defend the true religion, and forbearing the practice of all innovations already introduced into the worship of God; and to labour by all means lawful to recover the

* *Roth's Relation*, App., p. 208; *The Scots Scots' Discoveries*, 1639.

purity and liberty of the gospel as it was professed and established before the aforesaid innovations." This covenant was sworn and subscribed, with much solemnity, in the Greyfriars' Church at Edinburgh, on 1st of March 1638.

A fast was appointed. After sermon the covenant was read; upon which the earl of Loudoun, whose manner was peculiarly impressive, made an address to the assembled multitude, dwelling on the importance of this bond of union in present circumstances, and exhorting all to zeal and perseverance in the cause of the Lord. Thereafter Mr. Alexander Henderson, then minister at Leuchars, offered up an impassioned prayer for the divine blessing; when the noblemen present stepped forward to the table, subscribed the deed, and, with uplifted hands, swore to the observance of its duties. After them the gentry, the ministers, and thousands of every rank, subscribed and swore. The immense sheet of parchment was speedily filled, and numbers, for want of room, were obliged to sign only with their initials. The enthusiasm was universal; it seemed as if a new era had dawned on them; every face beamed with joy, and the city presented one scene of devout congratulation and rapture. "Behold," says a writer speaking of that time, "the nobility, the barons, the burghesses, the ministers, the commons of all sorts of Scotland—all in tears for their breach of covenant, and for their backsliding and defection from the Lord; and, at the same time, returning with great joy unto their God, by swearing cheerfully and willingly to be the Lord's. It may well be said of this day, Great was the day of Jezreel. It was a day wherein the arm of the Lord was revealed—a day

wherein the princes of the people were assembled to swear fealty and allegiance to that great king whose name is the Lord of hosts.”*

“To this much vilified bond,” it has been well said, “every true Scotsman ought to look back with as much reverence as Englishmen do to their magna charta. It was what saved the country from absolute despotism, and to it we may trace back the origin of all the efforts made by the inhabitants of Britain in defence of their freedom, during the succeeding reign of the Stuarts.”† But it must be viewed in a still more sacred light. It was the “oath of God,” sworn in his name, in agreement with his word, and in defence of his cause; and the effects bear a striking resemblance to those recorded in holy writ, as the native fruits of similar exercise in ancient Israel. The minds of the people were at once solemnized by the service, and cemented in defence of their religious privileges. They felt themselves bound to God, and to one another, not only by the common obligations of the divine law, which lie upon all men, independent of their own consent, but by the super-

* Wilson's Defence of Reformation Principles, p. 242.—All the presbyterian writers of that time bear witness that the divine presence accompanied this solemn service in a remarkable manner, and that its happy influences were everywhere manifest. The general assembly of 1640, in their letter to the Swiss churches, say, that “when they began to descend and search deeper into their hearts, the remembrance of their violated covenant pierced and penetrated their consciences; wherefore, being led by serious repentance, they resolved to renew the covenant, with confession,” &c. (*Epistola*, &c., subjoined to *Historia Motuum*.) And in another document they declare, that “the Lord from heaven did testify his acceptance of that covenant by the wonderful workings of his Spirit in the hearts both of pastors and people, to their great comfort and strengthening in every duty, above any measure that hath been heard of in this land.” (*Reasons against the Rendering of our Sworn and Subscribed Confession of Faith*.)

† Aikman's Hist. of Scotland, iii. 445.

added obligation of a voluntary oath—an oath sworn by the nation, and registered in heaven. They looked on themselves as embarked in a holy cause, in which it was an honour to suffer, and martyrdom to die. The prelates were thunderstruck at the event; and Spotswoode, the archbishop of St. Andrews, who had sagacity enough to foresee in it the doom of the whole prelatical fabric, exclaimed, in despair, “Now, all that we have been doing these thirty years bypast is at once thrown down!”*

The state of parties in Scotland at this remarkable era was very singular, and in some respects unprecedented. It is customary with high church historians to speak of the country as divided into two parties—the royal or prelatical, and the presbyterian; and they would even have us to believe that the latter was a mere “faction,” composed of rebellious persons, guided, or rather goaded on by a set of fanatical leaders. This, however, is just a specimen of the defamatory style uniformly adopted by the enemies of the truth, whenever the ministers of religion bestir themselves to vindicate the liberties of the church, or obtain the reformation of her abuses. The real state of matters was precisely the reverse. The two parties mentioned certainly existed in the country; but it is quite ridiculous to say that the nation was *divided* into them. The prelatical party maybe said to have been composed of the bishops alone, with a few of their underlings among the clergy, whom they had intruded into the church—a party so insignificant, in point of number, rank, wealth, or influence, that they may truly be called a faction—a faction opposed to the whole na-

* Bishop Guthrie's Memoirs, p. 35.

tion.* At the head of this faction, however, Charles, unhappily for himself and the country, had now openly placed himself. It was long before his good subjects, in the excess of their loyalty, would believe that he could be the author of the harsh and arbitrary proclamations issued against them from the English court; they ascribed the whole to the machinations of Laud, and the misrepresentations of the Scottish bishops, who, pretending to be frightened by the uproar about the liturgy, had fled to court, carrying to his majesty, and disseminating through England, the most false and exaggerated reports. There can be no doubt now, from unquestioned documents, that these prelates, by their infatuated counsels, were the principal means of plunging the nation into a civil war; but *their* loyalty, it seems, taught them to transfer all the responsibility, and consequently all the odium, of their measures, from their own heads to that of the monarch, on pretence of supporting the royal prerogative. To this rash policy, Charles, with an

* The misrepresentation referred to is only an echo of that circulated at the time by the deposed bishops who fled into England, and who gave out that "many, and some of the chiefest amongst the covenanters, were men of unquiet spirits and broken fortunes," &c. To this the noblemen and gentlemen replied: "It is known by all who are acquainted with this country, that almost the *whole kingdom* standeth to the defence of this cause, and that the chiefest of the nobles, barons, and burgesses, are honoured in the places where they live for religion, wisdom, power, and wealth, answerable to the condition of this kingdom; that the meanest of the commons who have joined in this cause, are content of their mean estates with the enjoying of the gospel; and no less known, that our adversaries are not for number any considerable part of the kingdom, and that the chiefest (setting aside some few statesmen, and such as draw their breath from court) are known atheists, or professed papists, drowned in debt, denounced his majesty's rebels for a long time past, are under caption of their creditors, and have already, in their imaginations, divided among them the lands of the supplicants, which they hoped to be possessed in by the power of England." (*The Remonstrance of the Nobility, Barons, &c.*, Feb. 27, 1639, p. 14.)

infatuation which seems to have been inherent in the Stuarts, was induced to yield; for he sent down a message informing his subjects in Scotland, to their grief and dismay, that the liturgy had been imposed by his own express orders, and that the measures of the bishops had his entire approbation;—and, as if this had not been enough, he gave the sanction of his name to an infamous libel against the Scottish nation, drawn up by one Dr. Balcanqual, and filled with the most unfounded statements and injurious reflections, which was published under the title of “The king’s large declaration.”* Thus the whole was converted into a personal quarrel between Charles and his subjects; and the question came to be, whether the people of Scotland should submit, in matters of religion, to his arbitrary dictates, irrespective of parliament or general assembly, or at once assert their privileges as Christians, and their rights as freemen?

In opposition to the contemptible faction which we have described, the Scottish parliament, the most ancient and respectable of the nobility, barons, and gentlemen, with the mass of the common people, were decidedly presbyterian. Nothing, indeed, is more remarkable, during the whole of this singular period, than the unanimity which prevailed on all the questions at issue between them and the court. With

* Baillie describes this declaration as “a number of silly fables invented for our disgrace,” “heaping up a rabble of the falsest calumnies that ever was put into any one discourse that I had read, to show that we were the most desperate traitors that yet had lived, and mere hypocrites, who, in matters of religion, had never been wronged, but had only sought pretences of religion to cover our plots of rebellion.” Exactly the view given of them by prelatical writers ever since, who, indeed, generally refer to this work of Balcanqual as their sole authority! (*Baillie’s Letters*, i. 140, 175, 208, Ban. edit.)

the single exception of Aberdeen, which was under the influence of the marquis of Huntly, and the Aberdeen *doctors*, who, owing to their distance from the immediate scene of action and lack of intercourse with their brethren, remained attached to the cause of prelacy, the whole nation cordially joined in the cause of the covenant. No compulsion was used to procure subscriptions, for none was needed. Some individuals, indeed, among the clergy, who refused to sign, might be treated somewhat unceremoniously; but this was rather an expression of the popular dislike at the measures with which they were identified, than an attempt to force their consciences. Every thing like personal violence was deprecated and repressed by the leaders of the covenant; and both Rothes and Baillie lament that their good cause should have been injured by any approach to such practices. So far from persons being compelled to sign the covenant, great care was taken to prevent improper or incompetent subscriptions. None were allowed to subscribe but such as had communicated in the Lord's supper. "Some men of no small note," says Henderson, "offered their subscriptions, and were refused, till time should prove that they joined from love to the cause, and not from the fear of man." "The matter was so holy," says the earl of Rothes, "*that they held it to be irreligious* to use violent means for advancing such a work." A unanimity so singular can only be ascribed to a remarkable effusion of the Holy Spirit, the genuineness of which was attested by the general revival of practical religion that marked the whole progress of the work. "I was present," says Livingstone, "at Lanark and several other parishes, when, on Sabbath, after the

forenoon's sermon, the covenant was read and sworn; and I may truly say, that in all my lifetime, excepting at the Kirk of Shotts, I never saw such motions from the Spirit of God. All the people generally and most willingly concurred. I have seen more than a thousand persons all at once lifting up their hands, and the tears falling down from their eyes; so that through the whole land, excepting the professed papists, and some few who adhered to the prelates, people universally entered into the covenant of God.* Nay, such was the enthusiasm that some subscribed it with their blood, and others would not be prevented from signing, even in the presence of the prelatical ministers and their underlings, who, with oaths and imprecations, and in some cases with drawn swords, attempted to intimidate them from coming forward.*

If we search for the secondary causes of such an excitement among a people proverbially sober and intelligent, the whole might be traced to three main sources of dissatisfaction and alarm—armenianism, popery, and despotism. It would be easy to enlarge on each of these topics, showing the close

* Baillie's Letters; Rothes' Relation; Livingstone's Life.—It may be proper to state that the counties north of Aberdeen, particularly Caithness, Sutherland, Ross, and Inverness, cordially entered into the covenant. "It was professed by all that it was the joyfulest day that ever they saw, or ever was seen in the north; and it was remarked as a special mark of God's goodness towards these parts, that so many different clans and names, among whom was nothing before but hostility and blood, were met together in one place for such a good cause, and in so peaceable a manner, as that nothing was to be seen and heard but mutual embracements, with hearty praise to God for so happy a union." (*Rothes's Relation*, p. 106.) At Inverness, the town drummer having been ordered to invite the inhabitants to sign the covenant, added to the proclamation, of his own accord, something about pains and penalties, which, Rothes says, "gave occasion to our adversaries to calumniate our proceedings." (*Ib.*, p. 107.)

connection in which they then stood to each other, and the ample grounds our forefathers had for apprehension. To ignorance of these causes, or to a wilful suppression, we may trace all the misapprehension which still exists, in so many quarters, regarding the struggles of our reforming ancestors at this period. Suffice it here to say, that arminianism, as then maintained in England, was fitted, if not intended, to pave the way for the introduction of popery; that Laud and his divines were radically popish; and that popery was then, as it has ever been in theory and practice, whatever it may be in profession, decidedly favourable to absolute despotism in the state.* The doctrine advocated by these divines, and by the doctors of Aberdeen, was, that the king was supreme judge in all causes, ecclesiastical as well as civil; and that, though all the subjects should be massacred in one day, or ordered to submit to the Turkish religion, under penalty of being spoiled of liberty, goods, and life, they had no alternative but to submit to his will.† This shows what sort of people our ancestors had to deal with. The question was not about obedience to law, but submission to an arbitrary prince, who held that his will was above all law; and who was supported by a clergy defending him in these extravagant claims, by popish powers urging him to exercise them, and by a large army in England levied to enforce them. In such circumstances, had Scotland yielded, she would have entailed on herself indelible

* Hist. Essay on the Loyalty of Presbyterians, p. 188; Bennet's Memorial of the Reformation, pp. 162-165; Rushworth, part ii. p. 76.

† Baillie's Letters, i. 89; Duplyes of the Ministers and Professors of Divinitie in Aberdeen. 1638.

disgrace. She did not yield; and the consequence was a struggle, which, commencing in this country, was soon transferred to England, and issued in a revolution that shook the throne, and involved the three kingdoms in a protracted civil war. During this contest, whatever may have been the designs of parties in England, the Scots distinguished themselves as much for true loyalty to their king as for fidelity to the cause of God, and patriotic devotion to their native country.

It is usually seen, that when Providence has some great work to accomplish in the church, instruments are raised up admirably fitted for the part they are designed to perform. At this juncture it is pleasing to find that, notwithstanding the oppression under which the church had laboured for thirty years, individuals arose, out of the ranks of the nobility, the barons, and the ministry, who, in point of talents, piety, and natural dispositions, seem to have been expressly formed for the struggle. Among these, the first place is due to Alexander Henderson, then minister of Leuchars in Fife, and who, for personal worth, as well as his prominent share in the transactions of this period, deserves particular notice. In the early part of his life, Mr. Henderson had been, to say the least, neutral in the contest between presbytery and episcopacy; there is even reason to think he was a defender of the corruptions introduced by the bishops. As a proof of this, he accepted a presentation from archbishop Gladstones to the parish of Leuchars, and such was the repugnance of the people there to his induction, that, on the day of ordination, they barricaded the church doors, so that the ministers, with Henderson, were obliged to

effect their entrance by the window. Some time after, having heard that Robert Bruce was to preach at a communion in the neighbourhood, Henderson, attracted by curiosity, went secretly to hear him, and placed himself in a dark corner of the church, where he might remain most concealed. Bruce came into the pulpit, and after a pause, according to his usual manner, which fixed Henderson's attention, he read with his wonted dignity and deliberation, these words as his text: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheep-fold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber." These words, so literally applicable to the manner in which he had entered upon his ministry, went "like drawn swords" to his inmost soul. He who wished to conceal himself from the eyes of men, felt that he was naked and opened before the eyes of Him with whom we have to do. In short, the discourse of this powerful preacher was, by the divine blessing, the means of Henderson's conversion; and ever after he retained a great affection for Bruce, whom he called his spiritual father.

After this wonderful change, which went much deeper than a conversion to presbyterianism, Henderson continued to discharge the duties of his retired parish in a manner much more conducive to the edification of his people, and laid up those stores of learning for which he afterwards found so much use. He became a decided opponent of the prelatical measures; and when matters came to extremity, his talents as a public speaker, his piety and learning, his gentlemanly and ingratiating manners, and his profound sagacity in business, pointed

him out to all his brethren as the fittest person for taking the lead in their affairs.*

Among the nobility who entered with heart and soul into the cause of the covenant, the most distinguished were the earls of Loudoun and Rothes. John Campbell, earl of Loudoun, was a nobleman whose patriotism, prudence, eloquence, and fortitude, justly entitle him to be regarded as the chief assertor both of the civil and religious rights of his country. From his youth, he attached himself to the presbyterian interest, which he saw was identified with the cause of civil liberty. On the commencement of the contentions in 1638, he took an active share in opposing the despotic measures of the court; and on one occasion roundly told the king's commissioner, in language which was soon re-echoed in tones of thunder from every part of the kingdom, "That they knew no other bands between a king and his subjects but those of religion and the laws. If these are broken," he said, "men's lives are not dear to them: *boasted* (threatened) we shall not be; such fears are past with us." Loudoun may be called the Brutus of Scotland during this epoch of her history; firm as a rock, nobly upright, sternly conscientious. The earl of Rothes, with the same high principles, was a man of a different stamp. Lively and facetious, polite in his address, and indefatigably active in all his movements, this young nobleman, who died at the age of forty-one, was at the head of all the enterprises of the covenanters, and rendered essential service to the cause.†

* Life of Alex. Henderson in Dr. M'Crie's Miscel. Writings. Part i. Life of A. Henderson, by Rev. Dr. Aiton, minister of Dolphington.

† In 1641, Rothes being in London shortly before his death, came into

In the month of June, after the swearing of the covenant at Edinburgh, the king sent down, as his commissioner to Scotland, the marquis of Hamilton, a nobleman of insinuating manners, chiefly with the view of conciliating the Scots, and inducing them, if possible, to renounce that oath. The covenanters had by this time become very suspicious of the designs of Charles, for which they had too good reason; for from a correspondence between the king and Hamilton, afterwards discovered, it was found that Charles was at this time making preparations for an invasion of Scotland. After describing these, he says to Hamilton, "Thus you may see that I intend not to yield to the demands of these traitors the covenanters. And as concerning the explanation of their damnable covenant, I will only say, that so long as this covenant is in force, whether it be with or without explanation, I have no more power of Scotland than as a duke of Venice, which I will rather die than suffer."* On his arrival in Scotland, however, Hamilton soon found that he had to deal with a people who were determined to "die rather than suffer" such an infringement of their rights, and who had now adventured too far to retrace their

high favour at court; and from some expression in Baillie's letters, it has been surmised, very unreasonably and uncharitably, that had he lived much longer, he would have changed sides and become an apostate. There is not a word spoken by Baillie that can be construed into such a suspicion, which seems, indeed, to rest on no better foundation than the conjecture of the strongly biassed mind of Clarendon. Among the other noblemen who engaged at this time in the cause of the covenant, may be mentioned, earls Eglinton, Montrose, Cassils, Home, Lothian, Wemyss, Dalhousie; and lords Lindsay, Yester, Sinclair, Boyd, Fleming, Elcho, Carnegy, Balmerino, Cranston, Cowper, Johnston, Forester, Melville, &c., &c.

* Burnet's *Memoirs of the Duke of Hamilton*, p. 60; *Peterkin's Records of the Kirke* (Introduct.), p. 14.

steps either with safety or a good conscience. No sooner, therefore, did he give a distant hint of his instructions, than the covenanters declared, that "there was not a man joined but would rather quit his life than his part in that covenant."* Alarmed at the arrival of some military stores at Leith, they blockaded the castle, and placed armed guards at the city gates; and it required all the artifice of the commissioner to allay the storm which he had injudiciously excited.

On the 9th of June, Hamilton, who had been residing at Dalkeith, entered Edinburgh with great pomp, and it was arranged that the manner of his reception should present a demonstration of the power and zeal of the covenanters. For this purpose, the circuitous road by Musselburgh, along the beach of the sea, was selected. The nobles, to the number of thirty, and all others who had horses, rode to the end of the long sands at Musselburgh, to accompany his grace to the palace. The people, to the number of sixty thousand, were ranged, under the directions of sir George Cuninghame, in ranks along the sea-side, extending to several miles. At the eastern extremity of Leith links, on the side of a rising ground, stood about seven hundred ministers, all in their cloaks—an exhibition of their numbers and unity in the cause. While riding slowly along through this prodigious array, and hearing so many thousands beseeching him on all sides, with tears, that he would advise the king to deliver them from the bishops and their books, and restore to them their beloved ministers, the marquis was deeply affected, and protested, that had the king

* *Roth's Relation*, p. 151.

been present to witness the scene, he would never think of forcing his obnoxious measures on such a people.

It is needless to dwell on the temporizing measures by which Hamilton endeavoured to bring over the covenanters. One of his plans deserves notice, as showing the unprincipled character of the means resorted to by the king. With the view of counteracting the covenant as sworn in the previous March, and sowing dissension among the covenanters, he ordered Hamilton to subscribe, in his name, the national covenant, as sworn in 1580, with a general bond for the maintenance of "the religion now presently professed," and to require all his subjects in Scotland to follow his example. The design of this manœuvre was very obvious. In the covenant, as sworn in 1580, no particular mention was made of prelacy, though there can be no doubt it was implicitly abjured by that covenant; and under the ambiguous phrase "the religion presently professed," it was clearly intended to screen prelacy, and involve those who had renewed the covenant in the alternative of either virtually renouncing their oath against prelacy, or incurring the charge of disobedience. When, therefore, the king's proclamation appeared, on the 22d of September, enjoining the swearing of "the king's covenant," as it was called, the covenanters, with great reason, protested against the stratagem. They maintained that, as that covenant was understood and explained, they could not swear it, having already subscribed it with an express clause renouncing prelacy and the innovations which had accompanied it.* "If we should now enter upon this new

* Reasons against Rendering our Subscribed Covenant; Baillie's Letters, '03-119; Rothes' Relation, p. 122.

subscription," said they, "we should think ourselves guilty of mocking God, and taking his name in vain; for the tears that began to be poured forth at the solemnizing of the covenant are not yet dried up and wiped away, and the joyful noise which then began to sound forth hath not yet ceased. As we are not to multiply miracles on God's part, so ought we not to multiply solemn oaths and covenants on our part, and thus to play with oaths as children do with their toys, without necessity." And they concluded by demanding a free general assembly of the church of Scotland, in which, without limitations prejudging the question, the prelates and all their innovations might be subjected to a fair and impartial trial.*

All the manœuvres of Charles and his bishops to outwit, intimidate, divide, or gain over the covenanters, having thus signally failed, the king found himself under the necessity of complying with the wishes of the people, and summoning "a free general assembly," which was indicted to meet at Glasgow, on Wednesday, November 21, 1638; and the marquis of Hamilton was appointed his majesty's commissioner. This assembly was appointed to inquire into the evils that distressed the country, and to provide suitable remedies; and the bishops having been generally accused as the authors of these disturbances, they were subjected, by his majesty's proclamation, to the censure of the assembly.†

* Protestation of the Noblemen, Barons, Gentlemen, &c., subscribers of the Confession of Faith and Covenant, lately renewed within the kingdom of Scotland, made at the Mercate Cross of Edinburgh the 22d of September, immediately after the reading of the proclamation, dated September 9, 1638, pp. 12-23.

† Reason for a General Assemblie, 1638, p. 5. See the royal procla-

This famous assembly met at Glasgow on the day appointed. A more noble, grave, and competent body of men never perhaps convened to deliberate on the affairs of the church. It consisted of 140 ministers, freely chosen by their different presbyteries, with 98 ruling elders, of whom 17 were noblemen of the highest rank, 9 were knights, 25 were landed proprietors, and 47 were burgesses of great respectability, capable of representing their respective communities in parliament. Some of the noblemen and gentlemen, hearing that an attempt would be made by the marquis of Hamilton, the king's commissioner, to overawe the assembly by a large retinue of followers, came accompanied by their usual retainers in arms. The assembly was conducted throughout with the utmost gravity and decorum, although honest Baillie makes grievous complaints of the manner in which they were incommoded and jostled by the crowd, who were very naturally anxious to witness their proceedings; and he gravely lectures the Scottish people in general for not taking a lesson on "modesty and manners" in church, "from Canterbury, yea, from the pope, yea, from the Turks or Pagans." "We are here so far the other way," says he, "that our rascals, without shame, in great numbers, make such din and clamour in the house of the true God, that if they minted to use the like behaviour in my chamber, I would not be content till they were down the stairs."

The order and dignity which characterized the proceedings of the assembly itself, meeting as it did in a period of such excitement, were mainly owing

mation, indicting a free general assembly at Glasgow, Records of the Kirke of Scotland, p. 81.

to the consummate tact, firmness, and address of its moderator, Alexander Henderson. For the exercise of these qualities, he found abundant occasion in the course of the seven days during which the commissioner kept protesting and disputing against their constitution. The king had called a "free general assembly;" but it soon appeared that he had never any intention of allowing it to meet. His secret correspondence with the commissioner, now published to the world, displays the duplicity of his character in the most extraordinary light.* He exhorts Hamilton to use all his endeavours, to divide the assembly, by sowing the seeds of jealousy between the laics and the clergy; if this failed, he was to protest against all their proceedings, and on no account to allow them to proceed to the censure of the bishops. The bishops, who had been subjected by the king's proclamation to the censure of the assembly, instead of appearing at the summons, sent in a declinature, in which, with ridiculous effrontery, they refused to acknowledge its authority, chiefly on the ground that the moderator was not a bishop, and because the meeting was partly composed of laymen, as they were pleased to call the ordained elders of the church;—thus setting themselves up as judges of a court before which they were cited as criminals, and presuming, in their own persons, to settle the grand point at issue, relating to the government of the church, which was to come before the assembly.

The first question, therefore, came to be, Whether the assembly found themselves competent judges of

* See Records of the Kirke of Scotland, by Alex. Peterkin; Part ii. Burnet's Memoirs of Hamilton, pp. 82-93.

the bishops? On this question being put by the moderator, the commissioner, after a long speech, in which he extolled his majesty's grace and condescension, presented to them a proclamation in the king's name, discharging the service-book, the articles of Perth, and the high commission, and declaring that the bishops should be answerable from time to time to the general assembly. The obvious design of this was, to quash all further proceedings against the bishops, whom Hamilton persisted in styling the "lords of the clergy"—to divide the assembly—and, at the same time, by apparently granting all the popular demands, to throw on the members, should they continue their sittings, the odium of unreasonable opposition to "a pious and gracious prince," who had done so much for the people. As to subjecting the prelates to the censure of the assembly, it was sufficiently clear, from their declinature, that nothing was further from their intentions, or more unlikely to happen.

In these circumstances, it required more than ordinary prudence in the moderator, to act a part at once respectful to royalty and true to the interests of the church. Henderson nobly discharged the task. "It well becometh us," he said in reply, "with all thankfulness to receive so ample a testimony of his majesty's goodness, and not to disesteem the smallest crumbs of comfort that fall to us of his majesty's liberality. With our hearts do we acknowledge before God, and with our mouth do we desire to testify to the world, how far we think ourselves obliged to our dread sovereign; wishing that the secret thought of our hearts and the way wherein we have walked this time past were made mani-

fest. It hath been the glory of the reformed churches, and we account it our glory after a special manner, to give unto kings and Christian magistrates what belongs unto their place; and as we know the fifth command of the law to be a precept of the second table, so do we acknowledge it to be the first of that kind, and that next to piety towards God, we are obliged to loyalty and obedience to our king. It has pleased his majesty to descend so far to his subjects' humble petitions, for which we render to his majesty most hearty thanks—offering, therefore, to spend our lives in his service. And we would do with him as the Jews did with Alexander the Great. When he came to Jerusalem, he desired that his picture might be placed in the temple. This they refused to grant unto him, it being unlawful so to pollute the house of the Lord; but they granted to him one thing less blameable, and far more convenient for the promulgation of his honour—to wit, that they should begin the calculation of their years from the time that he came to Jerusalem, and likewise that they should call all their male first-born by the name of Alexander: which thing he accepted. So, whatsoever is ours, we shall render to his majesty, even our lives, lands, liberties, and all; but for that which is God's, and the liberties of his house, we do think, neither will his majesty's piety suffer him to crave, neither may we grant them, although he should crave it.”*

On hearing this noble reply, the commissioner said, “ Sir, ye have spoken as a good Christian and a

* This account of the Glasgow assembly is taken from a MS. Journal of the assembly in my possession, compared with another in the possession of David Laing, Esq.

dutiful subject." The "dutiful subject" had spoken; it remained for the "good Christian" to act. Henderson repeated the question for the third time—"I now ask if this assembly find themselves competent judges of the prelates?" "If you proceed to the censure of their persons and offices," said Hamilton, "I must remove myself." "A thousand times I wish the contrary from the bottom of my heart," replied the moderator; "and I entreat your grace to continue to favour us with your presence, without obstructing the work and freedom of the assembly." The earl of Rothes seconded this request, using various arguments to prevail on the commissioner to remain, and even trying to coax him into good humour, but without effect. Hamilton began to shed tears, lamenting that such a weighty burden should have been laid on such a weak man, and acted his part so well as to draw tears from many. This scene continued for some time, when, perceiving that they were determined to proceed, he rose up, and after repeating his protestations, he, in the name of the king, as head of the church, dissolved the assembly, and discharged their further proceedings.

There are critical periods in the church, when the vital principles on which it is founded are at stake, and when to yield would entail, not only disgrace on the individuals most concerned, but ruin on the cause in which they are embarked. And such was the present. The assembly had indeed been convened by the king's authority, but they were not bound to dismiss at his bidding. Neither the laws of the land, nor the constitution of the church, as ratified by these laws, allowed any such power to the sovereign. The covenant had already been pro-

nounced by the lord advocate, and other legal officers, to be perfectly agreeable to law, and it was in pursuance of that engagement that the assembly had now met, though, for the sake of good order, they had requested the sanction of royalty. And none can accuse them of rebellion, in refusing to obey the command of the commissioner, except those who hold that the power of the king is supreme in ecclesiastical matters, and are prepared to re-enact the despotism which compelled our fathers to assume the attitude of resistance. Had the assembly broke up in obedience to this unconstitutional mandate, it would have amounted to a virtual acknowledgment of the king's claim to be head of the church, and to a denial of the headship of Christ. Besides, they would have been guilty of basely betraying the liberties of the church, when these were placed in manifest peril, and when they had a fair opportunity of asserting them. Our fathers were men of another spirit. As Christians, they chose "to obey God rather than men," "not fearing the wrath of the king." As presbyterians, they felt themselves called upon to contend for the distinguishing glory of presbytery—the independence of the church. As free-men, they claimed the protection of law, in opposition to the mandates of the sovereign. As an established church, they stood on the vantage-ground of having their spiritual privileges recognised and secured by national constitution; and as covenanters, they had pledged themselves to maintain and defend these privileges at all hazards.

While the commissioner, therefore, was in the act of retiring, a protestation, which had been prepared that morning in anticipation of such an event, was

presented by Rothes, and read by the clerk, in which, for reasons given at length, they declare, "In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, THE ONLY HEAD AND MONARCH OF HIS CHURCH, from a consciousness of our duty to God and his truth, the king and his honour, this kingdom and her peace, this assembly and her freedom, and the safety of ourselves and our posterity, in our persons and estates, we profess with sorrowful and heavy but loyal hearts, *we cannot dissolve this assembly.*" They likewise protested, that "if any stir should arise by impeding of their lawful meetings, the cause should not be imputed to them, who did ardently desire the commissioner's abode, but to the prelates, who had declined them, being conscious of their guiltiness." This protest having been read, the moderator delivered a cheering address, in which, with admirable dexterity, he converted the departure of the commissioner into an encouragement for them to remain. "All who are present know," he said, "the reasons of the meeting of this assembly; and albeit we have acknowledged the power of Christian kings for convening of assemblies, yet that may not derogate from Christ's right; for he hath given divine warrants to convocate assemblies, whether magistrates consent or not. Therefore, seeing we perceive his grace, my lord commissioner, to be so zealous of *his* royal master's commands, have we not also good reason to be zealous toward *our* Lord, and to maintain the liberties and privileges of his kingdom?" This, with similar exhortations from other members, made such an impression, that with the exception of one or two who slunk away, they all remained at their post. Lights were ordered to be brought in, and the question being

put, "If they would abide the whole time of the assembly and adhere to the protestation?" the whole assembly rose, and, as one man, decided in the affirmative. Lest, in the confusion of so many voices, any dissenting vote should have been unheard, the roll was called, and one by one they declared their resolution to remain till the business of the assembly was finished.

Before the roll was called, an incident occurred which greatly encouraged the assembly. A young nobleman, lord Erskine, son of the earl of Mar, who had formerly refused to sign the covenant, stepped forward to the table, and begged the audience of the assembly. In a low tone, but with great earnestness, and an utterance almost choked with tears, he said, "I request you, for the Lord's cause, right honourable and worthy members of this assembly, that ye would receive me into your number; for I have remained too long obstinate to your wholesome admonitions, being moved and stirred up by my own private ends, rather than any checks of conscience, which ends I cease to reckon before you; but I am ashamed of them, and that I should have dallied so long with God. Therefore, I request you, for Christ Jesus' sake, that ye would receive me into your number, and suffer me to subscribe our covenant." "Which words," says the record from which I quote them, "because he spake them with a low voice, the moderator rehearsed to the assembly, professing he could scarce utter them for tears, so that all almost who did hear him, through joy, were constrained to weep." "We all embraced him gladly," says Baillie, "and admired the timeousness of God's comforts." This was followed by another gratifying occurrence.

The earl of Argyle, who had hitherto appeared neutral, though he warmly sympathized with the covenanters, and had retired with the commissioner in hope of adjusting the quarrel, returned on the following day; and though not a member of the court, he cheerfully consented, at the request of the moderator, to remain and countenance their proceedings. The accession of such a nobleman, who was known to stand high in the royal favour, tended greatly to encourage the assembly; and his example was followed by many others of the king's counsellors. While Henderson, however, congratulated them on this "human encouragement," he took care to guard his brethren against placing too much reliance on it. "Though we had not a single nobleman to assist us," said he, "our cause were not the worse nor the weaker."

The first step taken by the assembly, was to nullify the six pretended assemblies which had been held since the accession of James to the English throne, including the assemblies from 1606 to 1618. These, for various reasons which even Hume allows to be "pretty reasonable," were declared to have been "unfree, unlawful, and null assemblies." They next proceeded to the censure of the prelates, fourteen in number, who were charged with a great variety of moral as well as ecclesiastical delinquencies. Of these, two archbishops and six bishops were excommunicated, four deposed, and two suspended. The task of publicly pronouncing these sentences devolved on the moderator; and on the following day, before an immense auditory, Henderson discharged his office in the gravest and most impressive manner. After sermon on Psalm cx. 1: "The Lord

said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool," he pronounced on the degraded prelates, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the awful sentence of deposition and excommunication. Never were the religious feelings of the people of Scotland wound up to such a pitch of intensity as on this remarkable occasion. To see the church of Scotland again rising in her might, after a slumber of more than thirty years, and, with her first awakened effort, prostrating those prelates who had so long lorded over her with more than clerical pride and power, appeared to them as a dream. A sensation of mingled awe and wonder pervaded the assembly; and as the more solemn part of the service approached, the interest became so intense, that even the reporters who took notes of the proceedings became too much agitated to continue their task. It is only necessary to add, that this assembly condemned the service-book, the canons, and the high commission; that they renounced the five articles of Perth; and that, after declaring prelacy to have been abjured by the national covenant, and to be contrary to the principles of the church of Scotland,* they, in the name of that church, and as a church of Christ, unanimously voted its removal, and re-

* In other words, the assembly decided, upon various grounds, that prelacy was abjured in the national covenant of 1580, and was included under the phrase of "the pope's wicked hierarchy." While the assembly was still sitting, the marquis of Hamilton issued a "Profession and Declaration," in which he endeavoured to prove that episcopal government was not abjured by that covenant. Shortly after there appeared, "An Answer to the Profession and Declaration, made by James, marquis of Hamilton, his majesty's high commissioner," in which his arguments were fully answered by the covenanters. Hamilton's Explanation of the Covenant, and the Answer, are inserted in the Large Declaration, pp. 327-337.

stored presbyterian government to all its former integrity.

The assembly having now sat from the 21st of November to the 20th of December, and held no less than twenty-six sessions, Henderson addressed them in an eloquent concluding speech. After apologizing for his own weakness in the part he had taken in the proceedings, and complimenting the ministers on the diligence and fidelity they had displayed, he thus proceeded:—

“ And now we are quit of the service-book, which was a book of slavery and service indeed; the book of canons, which tied us in spiritual bondage; the book of ordination, which was a yoke put upon the necks of faithful ministers; and the high commission, which was a guard to keep us all under that slavery. All these evils God has rid us of, and likewise of the civil places of kirkmen, which was the splendour of all these evils; and the Lord has led captivity captive, and made lords slaves. What should we do less than resolve, first, since the Lord has granted us liberty, to labour to be sensible of it, and take notice of it? For we are like to a man newly awakened out of a dream, or like a man that has lien long in the irons, who, after they are taken off and he redeemed, he feels not his liberty, but thinks the irons are on him still. So it is with us. We do not feel our liberty; therefore it were good for us to study to know the bounds of our liberty wherewith Christ hath set us free, and then again to labour earnestly that we be not more entangled with the yoke of bondage.

“ Then, for these nobles, barons, burgesses, and others, who have attended here, this I may say con-

fidently, and from the warrant of the word, ‘ Those that honour God, God will honour them.’ Your lordships, and these worthy gentlemen, who have been honouring God, and giving testimony ample of your love to religion this time bygone (though I will not excuse your former backslidings), if ye will go on, the Lord shall protect you, bless you, honour you; and your faith shall be found, in the day of the revelation of Jesus Christ, unto praise, honour, and glory. And I must say one word of these nobles, whom Jesus Christ has nobilitated indeed, and declared sensibly to be worthy of that title of nobility: Ye know they were like the tops of the mountains that were first discovered in the deluge, which made the little valleys hope to be delivered from it also; and so it came to pass. I remember reading, that in the eastern country, where they worship the sun, a number being assembled early in the morning to that effect, all striving who should see the sun first, a servant turned his face to the west, and waited on. The rest thought him a foolish man, and yet he got the first sight of the sun shining on the tops of the western mountains. So, truly, he would have been thought a foolish man, a few years ago, that would have looked for such things of our nobility; yet the Sun of Righteousness has been pleased to shine first upon these mountains; and long, long may he shine upon them, for the comfort of the hills and refreshing of the valleys; and the blessing of God be upon them and their families, and we trust it shall be seen to the generations following.

“ Last, I must give a word of thanksgiving to this city, wherein we have had such comfortable residence, and to the principal magistrates of it, who

have attended our meeting. The best recompense we can give them is, to pray for the blessing of God upon them; and to give them a taste of our labour, by visiting their college, and any other thing that consists in our power; that so the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ may be established among them, and that the name of this city may from henceforth be, '*Jehovah-shammah*—The Lord is there.' The 133d psalm was then sung, beginning thus:

“ Behold, how good a thing it is,
And how becoming well,
Together such as brethren are
In unity to dwell.”

The apostolical blessing was pronounced, and Henderson dismissed the assembly with these memorable words, uttered in a solemn and emphatic voice: “ *We have now cast down the walls of Jericho; let him that rebuildeth them beware of the curse of Hiel the Bethelite!*” “ And so,” says Baillie, “ we all departed with great comfort and humble joy, casting ourselves and our poor church in the arms of our good God.”

The assembly of 1638 may be regarded as one of the noblest efforts ever made by the church to assert her intrinsic independence, and the sole headship of Christ. Single martyrs have borne witness to the same purpose—single ministers, and even congregations, have stood out boldly for the same truth; but here we have the whole church of Scotland, by her representatives, in her judicial capacity, lifting up her voice, and proclaiming, before the whole world, the sovereign rights of her Lord and King. No church, except one constituted on the presbyterian model, could have borne such a testimony, or gained such a triumph; and the simple fact, that

such a noble stand was *once* made by the church of Scotland, should endear her to the hearts of all who, whatever may be their denomination, are the genuine friends of liberty, of the Christian religion, and of the best interests of man.

There can be no doubt that the original demands of the covenanters came short of the abolition of episcopacy; and that they would have been contented, at the outset, with some limitation of the power of the bishops, and their subjection to general assemblies, with the discharge of the articles of Perth and of the high commission court, and with the free entry of ministers. But, by degrees, their eyes were opened to discover the root of all these evils—the prelacy itself; and nothing tended more to produce this discovery than the measures of the court, which may be said to have driven them, step by step, into the right course, beyond their first intentions, and in some cases against them. This is repeatedly referred to in the speeches delivered at the Glasgow assembly, and in their public papers, with dutiful acknowledgments to that mysterious Providence “who had made the wrath of man to praise him,” and secured to himself the whole honour of a reformation accomplished by instruments who could not assume any of the credit to themselves.

Having described the external reformation thus effected, let us now take a glance into the interior of a presbyterian kirk, and see how the public worship was conducted about 1638. At eight o'clock on Sabbath morning appeared in the desk the reader, whose office it was to read the prayers from Knox's liturgy, and portions of scripture, before the minister entered the pulpit. These readers were found

so useful to the ministers, that, though the office had been declared by the general assembly to be without warrant, they were still allowed to officiate, and continued to do so till the Westminster assembly, when, much against the inclination of our Scots commissioners, they were condemned. The last relic of these ancient functionaries appeared in the practice, which was common till of late in some of the parishes of Scotland, of the precentor or schoolmaster reading some chapters of the bible before the ringing of the last bell.*

Immediately on entering the pulpit, the minister kneeled down and began with prayer, the people generally kneeling also. It was customary at some part of the service, to repeat the Lord's prayer and the doxology; but in other respects the worship was unfettered by forms, the officiating minister guiding the devotions of his flock, as Justin Martyr describes those of the primitive Christians, "according to his ability, without a prompter." Prayer being ended, the congregation joined in singing a portion of the psalms; a part of the service in which they took great delight, and in which they were so well instructed, that many of them could sing without the aid of a psalm-book.† No such pains had been

* Baillie's Letters, i. 413; Scott's MSS., Adv. Lib.

† From a very early period the Psalms of David, which were translated into metre by Sternhold and Hopkins, were sung in the Scots churches, and great pains were used to instruct the people in psalmody. From a curious document in the handwriting of Calderwood, we find that "men, women, and children, were exhorted to exercise themselves in the psalms," and that "sundry musicians of best skill and affection, for furtherance of the act of parliament anent the instructing of the youth in musick, have set down common and proper tunes to the whole psalms, according to the diverse forms of metre." (*Bannatyne Miscellany*, p. 231.) In 1631 there appeared a new version of the psalms, said to have been composed by king James; and Charles, among his other ill-

taken to instruct the people of England in this part of divine worship. So far from being able to sing the psalms "without buik," many of them were not able even to read them; and hence the Westminster divines found it necessary to enact, that, "for the present, where many in the congregation cannot read, it is convenient that the minister, or some other fit person appointed by him and the other ruling officers, do read the psalm line by line, before the singing thereof"*—an act of toleration which our Scottish ministers yielded with no small reluctance. "Then," says Lightfoot, in his Journal of the Assembly, "was our directory read over to the Scots commissioners, who were absent at the passing of it; and Mr. Henderson disliked our permission of any to read the psalms line by line; and this business held us in some debate."†

The psalm being sung, the minister offered up another short prayer, beseeching the influences of the Spirit to accompany the word preached. And then followed the sermon; which having been succeeded by prayer and praise, the congregation was dismissed with the apostolic blessing. The presbyterian discourses of this and the succeeding period, though some of them may not please a fastidious taste, and others are disfigured by a certain home-

judged innovations, insisted on this version being used instead of the old one. But our fathers had various objections to it. Calderwood says, "The people are acquainted with the old metaphrase more than any book in scripture; yea, some can sing all, or the most part, *without buik*, and some that cannot read can sing some psalms." (*Ibid.*) Mr. Row informs us that in the new version "there were some expressions so poetical, and so far from the language of Canaan, that all who had any religion did dislike them; such as calling the sun *the lord of light*, and the moon *the pale ladie of the night*," &c. (*Row's MS. Hist.*, p. 263.)

* Directory for Public Worship. † Lightfoot's Works, xiii. 344.

liness of style, hardly compatible, in our eyes, with the dignity of religious subjects, uniformly possess the sterling merit of rich evangelical sentiment and Christian experience; and in this respect present a striking contrast to the episcopal sermons of the same time, which are, in general, the driest, most jejune, and most pedantic productions imaginable.

The dress of the ministers was extremely simple. In 1610 king James, among other cares for his mother kirk, sent directions from court that all ministers should wear black clothes, and when in the pulpit should appear in black gowns. In general, however, the presbyterian ministers preferred the old Geneva cloak, which had much the appearance of a gown. As to the people generally, they seem to have conducted themselves during divine service with suitable decorum; though the following extract from the minutes of the kirk-session of Perth, would indicate that clergymen were occasionally exposed to annoyances similar to those of which they have had to complain in more modern times:—
“John Tenender, session-officer, is ordained to have his red staff in the kirk on the Sabbath-days, therewith to wauken sleepers, and to remove greeting bairns furth of the kirk.”*

According to the form now described, public worship was conducted in the church of Scotland from the reformation down to the period of which we are writing; and it has continued, with a few inconsiderable variations, to be the form observed from that time to the present. Laud's service-book did not survive the tumult of July 1637; and no attempt was made, even during the persecuting reigns of the

* Scott's MS. Register, ad. an. 1616.

Stuarts, to impose another book of prayers on the Scottish church.*

* The Countryman's Letter to the Curate; Sir G. Mackenzie's Vindication, p. 9; Dr. M'Crie's Miscellaneous Writings, p. 277.—The English liturgy was not introduced into Scotland till about 1711. Attempts were made to introduce it in 1707, but neither then, nor for several years afterwards, was it generally used, many of the episcopal clergy being greatly opposed to it, and continuing till their death to conduct the worship much after the presbyterian form. (*Defoe's History of the Union*, Preface, 20-27. *MSS. penes me.*)

CHAPTER VIII.

The Bishops' war—Preparations of the covenanters—Encampment at Dunse Law—Pacification at Birks—General assembly 1639—Private meetings—Lord and Lady Loudoun—Civil war renewed by Charles.

IT does not fall within the scope of these sketches to enter on a minute description of the hostilities which commenced shortly after the dissolution of the Glasgow assembly of 1638, or to settle the much disputed question, Who began the civil war? Those acquainted with the numerous causes which conspired to bring about this collision, will not place much weight on the meeting of that assembly. It has been alleged by many that Charles' concessions were such as ought to have satisfied the Scots; but they well knew that these concessions were not sincere, that he only waited the opportunity to retract them, and that he had been all the time making war-like preparations to prostrate their liberties at his feet. One thing is certain, that whoever may have been to blame in commencing hostilities, the Scots used every effort to prevent, and showed every disposition to terminate them. Aware that their proceedings at Glasgow would be misrepresented, and eagerly taken advantage of, they sent up a supplication to the king,

in which they most humbly and respectfully explained the reasons of their conduct. All, however, was of no avail. No sooner was it known at court that the assembly had continued to sit after being discharged by the commissioner, than the king meditated revenge. He was so highly incensed at the covenanters, says Burnet, that "he resolved neither to think nor talk of treating with them, till he should appear among them in a more formidable position." They had touched him on the tender point of the royal prerogative. As the champion of prelacy he deemed himself bound in conscience to resent the insult offered to the order. In short, his pride was piqued, and nothing would satisfy him but unconditional submission. The only answer he made, on reading their supplication was, "When they have broken my head, they will put on my cowl." He immediately raised an army in England, with which he advanced to the border, ordered a fleet to blockade the Firth of Forth, and despatched the marquis of Hamilton with another army, to land in the north, and join the forces under the command of the marquis of Huntly. As the parliament of England, with whom Charles had also quarrelled, refused to grant him supplies for this outrageous undertaking, the bishops, by the advice of Laud, came forward with large contributions. The inferior clergy in the English church declined all interference in the quarrel; but the papists, who expected everything from the triumph of the king's party, and acted under the private directions of the queen, were not slow in contributing to the object.* The war thus

* Clarendon's State Papers, vol. ii.; Hardwick's State Papers, vol. ii. pp. 118-124, &c.; Prynne's Hidden Works of Darkness, p. 177, &c.

commenced, having been instigated by the advice, and supported by the money, of the prelates, and being, moreover, mainly designed to support their episcopal pretensions, was commonly called by the English the "bishops' war," and Charles was termed in ridicule, "Canterbury's knight."

The posture of Scotland at this crisis was sufficiently alarming; but our fathers were not to be intimidated. They would not submit to be trampled on by a bigoted court, and an infuriated bench of bishops. "Certainly," says Baillie, "our dangers were greater than we might let our people conceive; but the truth is, we lived by faith in God, we knew the goodness of our cause, and we were resolved to stand to it at all hazards whatsoever, knowing the worst to be a glorious death for the cause of God and our dear country." Animated by such pious and patriotic sentiments, the nation rose almost simultaneously, and made vigorous preparations for meeting the threatened invasion. Charles, who had boasted in his letters and proclamations that he would force the Scots to unconditional submission, soon discovered the truth, of which the marquis of Hamilton forewarned him, that "while the fire-edge was upon the Scottish spirits, it would not prove an easy task to tame them."* An army was soon levied, by the orders of parliament, and placed under the command of general Leslie, a brave old veteran who had been trained to war under that noble champion of protestantism, Gustavus Adolphus, king of Sweden. Beacons were erected along the country, so constructed, that when a fire was lighted at the foot of a long pole, they were to stand to their

* Burnet's Memoirs of the Duke of Hamilton, p. 140.

arms; when another fire was kindled on a grate fixed to a transverse beam, they were to repair to their regiments; and in case of imminent danger, the whole army was summoned to the scene of action by the lighting of a tar-barrel placed on the top of the pole. By a series of vigorous measures, the covenanters soon made themselves masters of all the fortified places in Scotland. Apprehending danger from the king's fleet, they took care to fortify the town of Leith; and such was the zeal manifested by all classes, that about one thousand five hundred of both sexes, including ladies as well as gentlemen, wrought in the trenches till the fortifications were completed.*

But while thus providing for self-defence, the covenanters took care to vindicate themselves from the calumnies of their enemies.† The king having denounced them as traitors and rebels, even before they took up arms, and every effort being used by the bishops to render them odious in the eyes of the English, they published a paper, in which they "take God to witness that religion was the only subject, conscience the motive, and reformation the aim, of their designs;"‡ and that they had no intention of invading England, or casting off their

* "Noblemen, gentlemen, and others wrought at it; and none busier in bearing the rubbish than ladies of honour." (*Guthrie's Memoirs*, p. 54.)

† Some of these calumnies, though fully refuted at the time, are retailed even to this day. For example, the Glasgow assembly is charged with having restrained the liberty of the press; whereas they only prohibited any from printing "anything that concerned the kirk, without authority from the kirk, under the pain of church censure—a privilege ordinarily used from the time of the reformation." (*Remonstrance of the Nobility, &c.*, 1639, p. 16; *Printed Acts of Assembly*, 1638.)

‡ Information to all Good Christians within the Kingdom of England, p. 4. Edin., 1639.

dutiful obedience to his majesty's lawful commands. And when they found themselves compelled to take up arms, another paper appeared,* prepared by Henderson, in which the real state of the quarrel was explained, and their conduct in resorting to self-defence vindicated by many unanswerable arguments.

At length, the blazing tar-barrel announced that the invasion had taken place. A squadron of twenty-eight ships of war, carrying between five and six thousand English troops, under the marquis of Hamilton, appeared in the Firth of Forth; but the people flocking from all quarters to the point of danger, the fleet was literally pent up on both sides, and the soldiers durst not set a foot on shore. None distinguished themselves more on this occasion than old lady Hamilton, the mother of the marquis, who was so zealous a covenanter, that she came on horseback to Leith, at the head of an armed troop, with two pistols at her saddle; protesting, as is affirmed, that she would kill the marquis with her own hand, if he should venture to land in a hostile way: for which purpose, it is said, she had loaded her pistols with *balls of gold* instead of lead. It is certain she paid him a visit on board his ship, while he lay in the Forth. What passed at this interview we are not informed; but the people augured the best from it. "The son of such a mother," they said, "will do us no harm."† Hamilton was soon glad to make his escape, when he heard the tidings from the borders. The Scots encountered,

* Instructions for Defensive Arms. Edin., 1639.

† Whitelocke's Memorials, p. 30. The story about the "balls of gold" rests on the authority of Gordon of Straloch's MS. (none of the purest sources, to be sure); but the heroism of the old marchioness is noticed by Spang. (*Hist. Motuum*, p. 357.)

at Kelso, a part of the English army, much superior to their own in numbers, and at the first onset the English threw down their arms and fled, with the loss of three hundred men. "It would," says an English writer, "make too much sport with the English courage and bravery, which is so well confirmed in the world, to give an account how like scoundrels this army behaved."* "The English soldiers," says Baillie, "were a great deal more nimble at flying than fighting; and it was difficult to tell whether the arms of their cavalry were more weary with whipping, or their heels with jading their horses."† The real fact was, that the English had no heart in the business.‡ Whitelocke tells us, that though "the Scots had been proclaimed rebels in England, and a prayer was published, to be used in all the churches against them; yet nothing could alter the opinion of the English officers and private soldiers, who said 'they would not fight to maintain the pride and power of the bishops.'"§ They had been impressed into the service against their will; while the Scots, a nation sometimes vanquished, but never subdued, felt at the time, as Baillie says, that they would not have been afraid "though all Europe had been on their borders."

Encouraged by their success, but still standing on the defensive, the Scots encamped at Dunse Law, a hill near that town, in the beginning of June 1639.

* Defoe's *Memoirs of the Church of Scotland*, p. 189.

† Baillie's *Letters*, i. 210, Ban. edit.

‡ The king wrote to Hamilton that he was now fully satisfied of what that nobleman had told him in the gallery at Whitehall, viz., "That the nobility and gentry of England would never incline to invade Scotland, and thereby begin an offensive war." (*Mem. of D. Hamilton*, p. 139; *Nelson*, i. 231.)

§ Whitelocke's *Memoirs*, *ut. sup.*

The appearance they presented on this occasion is described with such *naïveté* by Baillie, that we cannot give it better than in his own words:—

“ It would have done you good to have cast your eyes athort our brave and rich hills as oft as I did with great contentment and joy; for I was there among the rest, having been chosen preacher by the gentlemen of our shire. I carried, as the fashion was, a sword and a couple of Dutch pistols at my saddle; but I promise, for the offence of no man, except a robber in the way; for it was our part alone to pray and preach for the encouragement of our countrymen—which I did to my power most cheerfully. Our regiment lay on the sides of the hill almost round about. Every company had, fleeing at the captain’s tent-door, a brave new colour, stamped with the Scottish arms, and this motto, *For Christ’s Crown and Covenant*, in golden letters. Our soldiers were all lusty and full of courage; the most of them stout young ploughmen; great cheerfulness in the face of all. They were clothed in olive or gray plaiden, with bonnets having knots of blue ribands. The captains, who were barons or country gentlemen, were distinguished by blue ribands worn scarf-wise across the body. None of our gentlemen were anything the worse of lying some weeks together in their cloaks and boots on the ground. Our meanest soldiers were always served in wheat bread, and a groat would have got them a lamb leg, which was a dainty world to the most of them. We were much obliged to the town of Edinburgh for money: Mr. Harry Rollok, by his sermons, moved them to shake out their purses. Every one encouraged another. The sight of the nobles and their beloved pastors

daily raised their hearts. The good sermons and prayers, morning and evening, under the roof of heaven, to which their drums did call them instead of bells, also Leslie's skill, prudence, and fortune, made them as resolute for battle as could be wished. We were feared that emulation among our nobles might have done harm; but such was the wisdom and authority of that *old little crooked soldier* (general Leslie), that all, with an incredible submission, gave over themselves to be guided by him, as if he had been the great Solyman. Had you lent your ear in the morning, and especially at even, and heard in the tents the sound of some singing psalms, some praying, and some reading the scripture, ye would have been refreshed. True, there was swearing and cursing and brawling in some quarters, whereat we were grieved; but we hoped, if our camp had been a little settled, to have gotten some way for these misorders. For myself, I never found myself in better temper than I was all that time till my head was again homeward; for I was as a man who had taken my leave from the world, and was resolved to die in that service, without return."*

Such were the people whom Charles compelled to rise in self-defence. The motto on their banners, FOR CHRIST'S CROWN AND COVENANT,† was meant to vindicate their appearance in arms, by proclaiming to the world that it was solely in behalf of the rights of conscience and religion. This gave a religious character to the whole enterprise, which it was of vital importance to keep in view; for Charles and his bishops had taken great pains to represent them

* Baillie's Letters, i. 211, Ban. edit.

† That is, for the headship of Christ over his church, and for the covenant in support of it.

as a set of lawless rebels, actuated by a factious spirit, and aiming at the subversion of royal authority. It was chiefly, too, to contradict this calumny, and show the sacredness as well as justness of their quarrel, that the ministers took such a prominent part in the war, both in the pulpit and in the field, and, I may add, in the cabinet also. From not attending to this circumstance, they have been reproached, not only by prelatical writers, but by others from whom better things might have been expected. To such as condemn defensive war, even when the dearest rights of a people are invaded, and who would adduce such passages of scripture as: "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal," and, "All they that take the sword shall perish by the sword," which were quoted at the time by the advocates of slavish submission to a despot, with the view of preventing a whole nation from using the only weapons by which they could vindicate their civil and religious liberties—to such persons we can only reply as one did of old, "We are not careful to answer you in this matter." Away with such pusillanimity! Scotland has ever been a loyal nation; but touch her on the point of conscience, and it will be found that, like her emblematic thistle, she cannot be touched with impunity. She has ever been more anxious to secure her religious rights than to enjoy civil privileges; her love of liberty has hitherto been entwined with her love of religion; and if these twin-sisters should ever be dissevered, we fear that the blow which divides them will prove fatal to both. We shall say no more in vindication of our Scottish ministers, than that their magnanimous spirit in coming to the field, presents a striking contrast to the conduct of the bishops, who,

after inciting the unfortunate monarch to fight against his subjects, accompanied him only to York, and then left him, in the hour of peril, to finish as he best might the war which they had urged him to begin.*

The issue of the affair at Dunse Law was, that the king, perceiving the determined front opposed to him, and his own troops daily deserting, proposed a negotiation for peace. Commissioners from the army of the covenant, among whom were the earls of Rothes and Loudoun, and Alexander Henderson, having first required a safe-conduct under the king's own hand, were admitted to an audience with his majesty, in his camp at Birks, on the south side of the Tweed; and upon being required to state their demands, Loudoun, falling on his knees, said, that "they only asked to enjoy their religion and liberties, according to the ecclesiastical and civil laws of the kingdom." In particular, they entreated that the acts of the late assembly at Glasgow should be ratified by parliament; that all matters ecclesiastical should be determined by the assemblies of the kirk, and matters civil by parliament; and that those incendiaries who had endeavoured to set two neighbour kingdoms at variance might be tried by the laws of their country, and punished according to their deserts. A treaty was at length agreed upon, of a very general and ambiguous description, but which the covenanters, in their extreme desire of peace, gratefully accepted.† The commissioners

* *Memoirs of the Church of Scotland*, p. 189.

† "In the course of the negotiation, the Scots told the king that if he would give them leave to enjoy their religion and their laws, they would, at their own expense, transport their army to assist in the recovery of the Palatinate—a memorable circumstance unnoticed by historians." (*Macaulay's Hist.*, ii. 295; *Sydney's State Papers*, ii. 602.)

were sumptuously entertained by the officers of the king's army: Rothés kept them all in good humour by his jests and anecdotes; and thus, as one of the English wits observed, the bishops were beaten on this occasion, "neither by *civil law*, nor by *canon law*, but by *Dunse Law*." The commissioners returned, thankful for, rather than proud of, their success, and the army was disbanded, though, having intelligence of a treacherous design to break the treaty, they still kept the officers on half-pay. "Yea," says Baillie, who was a high loyalist, though a stanch covenanter, "had we been ten times victorious in set battles, it was our conclusion to have laid down our army at his feet, and on our knees presented nought but our first supplications. We had no other end of our wars; we sought no crowns; we aimed at no lands and honours; we desired but to keep our own in the service of our prince, as our ancestors had done; we loved no new masters. Had our throne been void, and our voices been sought for the filling of Fergus' chair, we would have died ere any had sitten down on that fatal marble but Charles alone."* Such, we have reason to believe, were the sentiments of the whole Scottish nation at this time. Such was their loyalty, as it appears in all their public papers, and, as it was proved, through all the political changes that followed, down to the restoration of Charles II., which was brought about mainly by the presbyterians. And such were the men who are stigmatized to this day as republican and anti-monarchical rebels!

Charles, we may easily believe, was much mortified at being compelled to treat with men whom he

* Baillie's Letters, i. 215.

had doomed to destruction; and he resolved, on the first opportunity, to break through all his engagements. He began by blaming the Scots for not discharging their officers, and for pressing the covenant upon his subjects. To these complaints it was answered, that as general Leslie, and those who had accompanied him, had relinquished their posts of honour and profit in Sweden to serve their native country, they judged themselves bound in honour to give them entertainment; and that as to the covenant, they could aver that none had, to their knowledge, been forced to subscribe it. The king then attempted a new stratagem: he sent an order for fourteen of the leading noblemen and ministers to hold a conference with him at Berwick, with the purpose, there can be no doubt, of entrapping them. Six of the number waited on his majesty, but he declined imparting his pleasure till the whole fourteen were present; and the six were dismissed, like Joseph's brethren, upon promise that they should return and bring up the rest with them. This step excited the utmost alarm in Edinburgh: they had now begun to distrust the king in everything; they suspected a plot against their leaders; and when the fourteen, among whom was Mr. Henderson, were setting out on their way to Berwick, they were stopped at the Watergate by a multitude of the lower classes, who took their horses from them, and ordered them to stay at home—an order which, as may be supposed, they were not very unwilling to obey.*

Notwithstanding this affront, by which he was deeply offended, the king found himself obliged to

* A True Representation of the Proceedings of the Kingdome of Scotland since the late Pacification. Printed in year of God 1640, p. 21.

sanction a meeting of the general assembly, which was appointed to be held at Edinburgh, in August 1639. The earl of Traquair was sent as commissioner, with secret instructions to prevent, if possible, the condemnation of episcopacy, and to protest, at the close of the assembly, that any concessions made by him, with which the king might be dissatisfied, "his majesty should be heard for redress thereof, in his own time and place." The assembly was placed in a somewhat awkward predicament, in consequence of an agreement entered into by the Scots commissioners at the pacification at Birks, that no reference should be made to the proceedings of the Glasgow meeting. This agreement, however, which showed their ardent desire for a peaceful settlement of the contention, was qualified at the time by a declaration, that though his majesty could not approve the Glasgow assembly, it was not his majesty's mind that any of the presbyterians "should be thought to disapprove or depart from the same." Accordingly, when Traquair would have had them consider all that was done against the bishops at that time as null and void, the assembly firmly answered, that they were careful not to offend the king by requiring any formal approbation on his part of the Glasgow assembly; but that, "*while they breathed*, they would not pass from that assembly." Finding them determined, the commissioner, to their great joy and astonishment, announced his seemingly gracious concessions, and, with consummate duplicity, pledged himself, in his sovereign's name, to sanction an act of assembly, embracing all the points for which the covenanters had struggled, assenting to the abolition of episcopacy and of all the innovations and evils

condemned by the Glasgow assembly, and undertook to get this act ratified in parliament. This artifice succeeded: the suspicions of the presbyterians were lulled, and the declaration of the commissioner threw them into raptures of devout joy and chivalrous loyalty. The stern heroes of the covenant were melted into tears; and the venerable patriarchs of the old presbyterian church, who had served at her altars for half a century, and who had mourned her degradation in silent sorrow or sad captivity, poured out their hearts in thanksgiving to God and the king in the most affecting terms.*

“ Old Mr. John Row being called upon, with tears, said, ‘ I bless, I glorify, I magnify the God of heaven and earth, that has pitied this poor church, and given us such matter of joy and consolation; and the Lord make us thankful, first, to our gracious and loving God, and next, obedient subjects to his majesty.’

“ Mr John Weymes, being called on, could scarce get a word spoken for tears trickling down along his gray hairs, like drops of rain or dew upon the top of the tender grass; and yet withal smiling for joy, he said, ‘ I do remember of a glorious reformation in Scotland. I do remember when the kirk of Scotland had a beautiful face. I remember since there was a great power and life accompanying the ordinances of God, and a wonderful work and operation upon the hearts of the people. This mine eyes did see: mine eyes did see a fearful defection after, procured by our sins; and no more did I wish, before mine eyes were closed, but to have seen such a beautiful day as, to my great comfort, I now see this day,

* Records of the Kirk of Scotland, p. 273.

and that, under the conduct and favour of our king's majesty. Blessed for evermore be our Lord and King, Jesus; and the blessing of God be upon his majesty, and the Lord make us thankful!'

"The moderator (David Dickson) said, 'I believe the king's majesty made never the heart of any so blyth in giving them a bishoprick, as he has made the heart of that reverend man joyful in putting them away. Would God the king's majesty had a part of our joy that we have this day!'" *

The same assembly condemned the book entitled the "King's Large Declaration," and understood to be the production of Dr. Balcanqual, as an infamous libel, "dishonourable to God, to the king's majesty, and to the national kirk, and stuffed full of lies and calumnies." To crown their triumph, they obtained the sanction of the commissioner and of the Scottish privy council to the covenant as it had been sworn the preceding year; and it was accordingly ordered to be subscribed by all ranks and classes within the kingdom.

So much has been said about the Scottish presbyterians at this period compelling the lieges to swear the covenant, that a few words may be necessary to explain this part of their history. We have already seen that, at first, no compulsion was used, with the consent either of the church or of the parliament, in imposing the covenant. Aberdeen was almost the only town that could complain of being forced into the bond; and for this the Aberdonians had themselves to blame, having taken up arms against the covenanters, and thus set themselves against the

* MS. Journal of the General Assembly 1639 (*penes me*), p. 372; Records of the Kirk, p. 251.

whole country.* So that when Montrose was sent, in 1639, to that "unnatural town," as it was called, he took it upon himself, without any authority, to compel the bailies and chief persons to subscribe the covenant. The same conduct, we regret to say, was followed by colonel Munro, a Highland gentleman, who had distinguished himself abroad, and who, being accustomed to pillage in the German wars, suppressed the king's adherents in the north with unjustifiable severity. Having been sent to Aberdeen to oppose the marquis of Huntly and the earl of Aboyne, who were levying forces and fortifying that part of the country against the covenanters, the colonel's first exploit, for which he had no warrant from church or state, was to impose the covenant on all whom he suspected of disaffection: and for disobedience to this injunction, Mr. Irvine of Drum, and twelve other gentlemen, with twenty-six burgesses of Aberdeen, were sent up as prisoners to Edinburgh,

* The following letter affords decided evidence that the leaders of the covenant had not the slightest intention of enforcing it by civil pains and penalties. It was written by the earl of Rothes to his cousin, Patrick Leslie, who was provost of Aberdeen: "LOVING COUSIN,—Because your town of Aberdeen is now the only burgh in Scotland that hath not subscribed the Confession of Faith [so the covenant was then termed], and all the good they can obtain thereby is, that if we sail fairly, as there is very good condition offered, they shall be under *perpetual ignominy*, and the doctors that are unsound *punished by the assembly*; and if things go to extremity because they refuse, and in hopes of the marquis of Huntly's help, the king will perhaps send in some ship or ships and men there, as a sure place; and if that be good for the country judge ye of it. It is but a fighting against the high God to resist this course. . . . Do all the good ye can in that town and the country about: ye will not repent it; and attend my lord Montrose, *who is a noble and true-hearted cavalier*. . . . I am your friend and cousin,—ROTHES. Leslie, 13th July 1638." (*Rothes' Relation*, App., p. 216.) The passage in the above letter respecting the marquis of Montrose, who at this time professed great zeal for the covenant, is worthy of notice. We shall find this "noble and true-hearted cavalier" appearing, a few years after this, in his true colours.

till, as Munro said, "they should learn to speak the country language." These are the only instances in which we hear of any severe measures to enforce the covenant; and when it is considered that they were adopted during the heat of a civil war, and committed, in the first instance, by one who proved a renegade, and in the other, by a rough soldier of fortune, who had no notion of conscientious scruples in the matter, they are hardly worth the indignation that has been wasted on them.

But why, it may be asked, did they procure an order to enforce subscription to the covenant by civil pains and penalties? Far be it from us to defend persecution for religious opinions, or to justify the covenanters in any instance where it can be shown they were guilty of this; but to form a candid judgment on the question, we must consider the circumstances in which our fathers were placed. In a time of civil war, it is found necessary to administer tests and exact compliances, which would be thought intolerable in a time of peace; and as this war was raised entirely on religious grounds, the covenant, which was intended as a bond of mutual defence and confederation, was the only effectual means of distinguishing friends from foes. Had there been a party in the country conscientiously opposed to presbytery, and yet favourable to the struggle made by the presbyterians for civil liberty, a civil test would have been quite sufficient. But no such party existed. Those opposed to presbytery, were all the advocates and abettors of civil despotism; those who would not abjure prelacy, would have wreathed around the necks of their countrymen the galling chains of civil and ecclesiastical thralldom. The name of *malig-*

nants, which this party now acquired, shows the light in which they were generally regarded. But the best vindication of the presbyterians is to be found in their actual practice. Though they considered it necessary to obtain the sanction of the civil power to the covenant, by which it was constituted a legal and national deed, and though severe laws were afterwards passed against those who refused subscription to it, which cannot in themselves be defended, yet it is not possible to point to a single instance in which any were put to death; and very few instances occurred in which any were subjected to hardships for refusing to subscribe it.

Superficial thinkers have been accustomed to indulge in sage reflections on the intolerance of our Scottish ancestors; professing to wonder that, on escaping from persecution, they should have become persecutors themselves; and charitably concluding that, had they possessed the power, they would, like all dominant sects, have abused it as much as their opponents. As their history becomes better understood, such sentiments are found to require considerable qualification. Men of sense and candour, guided by the spirit of a less flimsy religion, and the light of a sounder philosophy, are beginning to discover that the intolerance of the covenanters, if it indeed deserves that name, was all on the side of liberty; that the power which they claimed was wielded in the promotion of morality and liberal education; and that their measures, severe and trenchant as they may be thought, if successful, would have issued in the entire demolition of civil and ecclesiastical tyranny.

The proceedings of the general assembly of 1639,

while they diffused general joy through Scotland, gave mortal offence to the king, who blamed his commissioner for having exceeded his instructions, so that when the Scottish parliament met for the purpose of ratifying the acts of assembly, they were prorogued by royal mandate till June 1640.* Against this arbitrary proceeding the members remonstrated, and sent the earl of Loudoun, with other deputies, to London, to lay their grievances at the foot of the throne. The result was, that Loudoun was sent to the Tower on a charge of high treason; and if we are to believe the secret history of the period, the king resolved to despatch him privately, without trial or even charge, after the manner of an Eastern sultan. About three o'clock in the afternoon he sent an order to sir William Balfour, the lieutenant of the Tower, to see lord Loudoun's head struck off within the prison before nine the next morning. When the sentence was communicated to the prisoner, he heard it with the utmost composure; but the lieutenant, anxious to save him from death, and his majesty from disgrace, apprized the marquis of Hamilton, and both immediately repaired to the king, whom they found in bed, and earnestly besought him to reverse the warrant. At first Charles stormed, and declared, with an oath, that it should be executed; but on Hamilton setting before him the danger of the measure, he yielded, and sullenly tore the warrant in pieces.†

* Even this parliament the king refused to sanction. The estates, however, met at the time appointed, June, 1640, and, in the absence of the king's commissioner, voted themselves a legal parliament, and among other acts, ratified the general assembly at Glasgow, and rescinded all laws in favour of prelacy.

† Burnet's Mem. of Hamilton, p. 161; Rushworth, iii. 99; Oldmixon's

We notice this incident chiefly for the purpose of introducing another, not so generally known, regarding the lady of this illustrious nobleman. On hearing of her husband's imprisonment, lady Loudoun presented in person a petition to the Scottish parliament, beseeching them to interfere in his behalf, from consideration of the loss which his family and the country would sustain by his death. The parliament having cheerfully acceded to this request, her ladyship returned them thanks. "But," said the heroine, "I hope your lordships will not suffer your loving apprehension of my husband's danger to restrain you from any course which your lordships think advantageous for the kirk and kingdom. To these I desire your lordships to have regard only, and never to prejudice them in the least, for any compassionate consideration of my dear husband's suffering."* Had this speech been delivered by the lady of a cavalier, it would, doubtless, have called forth universal and unbounded admiration. But lady Loudoun was a covenanter; and it is probable that, in certain quarters, this will share the fate of similar instances of female heroism and self-denial at this period, which our high church historians can only account for on the supposition that these ladies, in their zeal for securing to their husbands the crown of martyrdom, must have been contemplating the advantages of a second match! Such writers are as incapable of appreciating the sacred enthusiasm of these high-spirited women as they

England, i. 140; Scots Staggering State, &c.—"This is so extraordinary an event," says Mr. Brodie, "that I rejected it in the first instance: but on a maturer reflection, I have seen it in a different light." (*Hist. British Empire*, ii. 515.)

* MS. Register of Rescinded Acts, 1640, in Register Office.

are of understanding the manly principles which animated their husbands and brothers in this glorious cause.

While thus involved in outward trouble, the presbyterians were threatened with intestine discord, from a dispute which arose in 1639 regarding private meetings. During the tyranny of the prelates, it had been customary for religious persons, particularly in Ireland, to meet in private houses for prayer and Christian conference; and the Scottish exiles, on returning home from that country after the expulsion of the bishops, felt naturally desirous to keep up these meetings, from which they had derived much comfort in the time of their troubles. Some of them are said to have been tinctured with Brownism or Independency, and they were accused of various excesses and disorders. It seems unquestionable, that some of the more forward had, in their zeal for such means of private edification, spoken in disrespectful terms of the ordinary ministry, or of some ministers who had opposed them. This roused the ire of Mr. Harry Guthrie, minister of Stirling, and afterwards bishop of Dunkeld, who brought the matter for adjudication before the assembly which met at Aberdeen in July 1640. The consequence was, a keen dispute, in which Samuel Rutherford defended the private meetings; while Calderwood, who, from having witnessed the extravagances of the Brownists in Holland, entertained a great dread of anything approaching to Independency, argued against them. Much to the dissatisfaction of many, this assembly condemned the practice; but the question having been renewed in the assembly of 1641, was amicably settled by their agreeing to certain regulations,

drawn up by Henderson, for preventing the abuse of such meetings.*

It is needless, as it is painful, to dwell on the subsequent proceedings of the infatuated monarch. Yielding to the solicitations of his prelatical counsellors, and having obtained funds from them for renewing the war, Charles once more, in spite of all his promises, denounced the Scots as rebels, and, without any provocation, prepared to invade the country. On this occasion the Scottish army did not wait his approach, but entered England, and encountering the enemy at Newburn, gained another decisive victory on the 28th of August 1640. The result was another treaty, begun at Ripon, and afterwards transferred to London. Mr. Henderson having been included among the commissioners for conducting this treaty, it was deemed advisable by the general assembly that he should be accompanied by some of the ablest of his brethren, who might be useful in combating the errors of the times, and devising means for settling the unhappy differences which prevailed. The persons selected for this purpose were Mr. Robert Baillie, Mr. George Gillespie, and Mr. Robert Blair, who set out in high spirits for the English metropolis. "We rode," says Baillie, in a letter to his wife, "upon little nags, each attended by his servant. We were by the way at great expenses; their inns are all like palaces; and no marvel—they extortion their guests. For three meals, coarse enough, we would pay, together with our horses, sixteen or seventeen pound sterling, and some three dishes of creevishes, like little par-

* Guthrie's *Memoirs*, p. 78, *et seq.*; Baillie's *Letters*, i. p. 107; M'Crie's *Miscellaneous Writings*, p. 38, Ap. ii.; *Records of the Kirk*, p. 294.

tans, two and forty shillings sterling." Such was the humble guise in which the founders of the solemn league went up to London, where they found everything prepared for an important change. "Mr. Blair and I," says Baillie, "preached to our commissioners at home; for *we had no clothes for outgoing*. Many ministers used greater freedom than ever here was heard of. Episcopacy itself beginning to be cried down, and a covenant cried up, and a liturgy to be scorned. The town of London, and a world of men, mind to present a petition, which I have seen, for the abolition of bishops, deans, and all their apperteanances. Huge things are here in working! All here are weary of bishops."* But to form a proper idea of the causes which led to this revolution, the scene must now be transferred for a little to England.

* Baillie's Letters, i. 271, 274, Ban. edit.

CHAPTER IX.

The scene changes to England—The star chamber—Irish massacre—The long parliament—The solemn league and covenant—Westminster assembly—George Gillespie—Westminster standards—Presbyterianism in England—Presbyterianism in Ireland—Erastianism and sectarianism.

FROM the unhappy hour when judicial toleration was granted to popery, on the arrival of Charles' queen in England, there followed a series of arbitrary measures which alarmed the jealousy of the English nation. Archbishop Laud, who ruled the church with a rod of iron, had been striving to reintroduce the worst errors of Romanism, and whatever might be his private motives, it was evident to all that the real tendency of his measures was to restore the authority of the pope. The proceedings of the infamous star chamber, over which he presided, had roused the indignation of all classes. Many of the best ministers in the land had been imprisoned, pilloried, or driven into banishment, for nonconformity. Multitudes of people, despairing of religious liberty at home, had submitted to voluntary exile, and fled to America, where they planted a colony in New England. Even this last resource was grudged them, and means were taken to prevent the emigra-

tion of the puritans, as they were called. Among the rest, it is said, two individuals who had incurred the vengeance of the prelates, were on the point of embarking for the New World, when the government issued orders to prohibit the ship from sailing—these were John Hampden and Oliver Cromwell. And thus, if the report be true, in the inscrutable arrangements of Heaven, it was ordered that these persons should remain to act their distinguished part in the revolution which followed; and that the royal party should, in pursuance of their own reckless policy, forcibly detain the very instruments destined for their own destruction.

As a specimen of the cruelties exercised by the star chamber, we may notice their treatment of Dr. Alexander Leighton, father of the celebrated archbishop of that name. This worthy man, who was a professor of divinity in St. Andrews, was apprehended in London, at the instigation of Laud, and on the charge of having published a book, entitled “Zion’s Plea against the Prelacy,” was thrown into prison. There he lay in a filthy hole, infested with vermin, for fifteen weeks; and when served with his libel, he was reduced to such a state of distress, that his hair and skin had come off his body, and he was unable to appear at the bar. In this wretched condition he was condemned, unheard, to suffer the following sentence in November 1630. On hearing it pronounced, we are told that Laud “pulled off his cap and gave God thanks;” but the bare recital of it, in the petition of Dr. Leighton, some years afterwards, at the trial of the archbishop, sent such a thrill of horror through the parliament, that the clerk was repeatedly ordered to stop till the members had recovered them-

selves. " This horrid sentence was to be inflicted with knife, fire, and whip, at and upon the pillory, with ten thousand pounds fine; which some of the lords of court conceived could never be inflicted, but only that it was imposed on a dying man to terrify others. But Laud and his creatures caused the sentence to be executed with a witness; for the hangman was animated with strong drink all the night before in the prison, and with threatening words, to do it cruelly. Your petitioner's hands being tied to a stake, besides all other torments, he received thirty-six stripes with a treble cord; after which he stood almost two hours in the pillory, in cold, frost, and snow, and then suffered the rest, as cutting off the ear, firing the face, and slitting up the nose. He was made a spectacle of misery to men and angels. And on that day sevensnight, the sores upon his back, ears, and face not being cured, he was again whipped at the pillory in Cheapside, and there had the remainder of the sentence executed, by cutting off the other ear, slitting up the other nostril, and branding the other cheek !"*

In June 1637, similar punishments were inflicted on Mr. Prynne, Dr. Bastwick, and Mr. Burton, three eminent puritans, whose only crime was writing against Laud and his ceremonies. The generous spirit of the English people revolted at such exhibitions, which only rendered their perpetrators odious, and prepared the way for their downfall. The sufferers at the pillory, instead of being mocked by the spectators, met with their cordial sympathy; and symptoms began to appear, very plainly indicating that had Laud been placed in the same degrading

* Neal's Hist. of the Puritans, ii. 385; Ludlow's Tracts, p. 23.

position, with his "mean sallow visage, pinched features, and peering eyes," the very picture of the superstitious littleness of his mind, the spectacle would have been hailed with shouts of universal satisfaction.*

In 1641, an event occurred which awakened the whole population of England, as well as Scotland, to a full sense of the danger to which their religion and liberties were exposed—we refer to the horrible massacre of the protestants of Ireland by the Roman catholics. The exact amount of the share which Charles had in this infamous transaction is involved in considerable perplexity;† but certain it is, that the avowed object of the leaders in the insurrection was to subjugate the parliament of England and the Scots army, and make common cause with the king in his struggle for arbitrary power. Religious rancour, goaded by superstition, lent its energies to this design. The ignorant natives, schooled by their priests into the belief that they would merit heaven

* New Discovery of the Prelates' Tyranny, in their late Prosecutions of Dr. Bastwick, Mr. Burton, and Mr. Prynne; Ludlow's Tracts, p. 25.

† The truth of history requires us to state, that not only was Charles strongly suspected at the time of having encouraged the rebellion, but that evidence exists calculated to leave the dark stigma uneffaced from his character. It is certain that the rebels produced a commission, with the king's broad seal attached to it, in vindication of their atrocities; and it is equally certain that Charles granted commissions under the great seal, empowering the Irish leaders to take up arms in his behalf. (*Reid's History of Presb. Church in Ireland*, ii. 303.) It is stated, on what appears the strongest authority, that when the marquis of Antrim pleaded for the restoration of his estates in the reign of Charles II., the ground of his claim was, that Charles I. had given his consent and authority for what he had done; and that the letter was read before parliament, and produced a general silence. (*Calamy's Life of Baxter*, p. 143.) This is confirmed by further evidence in Bennet's Memorial of the Reformation, p. 196. See also "Declaration of the Commons assembled in Parliament, Concerning the Rise and Progress of the Grand Rebellion in Ireland." London, 1643.

by putting the heretics to death, received the sacrament before commencing the work of carnage, and they swore they would not leave a protestant alive in the kingdom. The scene of slaughter opened on the 23d of October 1641, and continued without intermission for several months. The protestants of Ulster were attacked with a savage ferocity unparalleled in the annals of civilization. No mercy was shown to sex or rank, age or infancy. The mother was reserved only to see her helpless children butchered before her eyes, and then to suffer the same fate. Some wretches were prevailed upon, by the promise of life, to become the executioners of their dearest relatives; and after having incurred this tremendous guilt, were executed in their turn. Others, after being tempted by the same promise to disown their faith and conform to the popish rites, were coolly told, that, lest they should relapse, it would be charity to send them immediately to heaven, and were forthwith put to death. In these tragical scenes the women, under the influence of religious frenzy, were as active as the men; and mere children, hardly able to wield the knife, were urged by their parents to stain their little hands in blood. But time would fail us to recount the cruelties and indignities committed on the unhappy protestants.*

* The bare mention of these execrable atrocities is enough to make the ears tingle. Not to speak of the multitudes who perished in the field of battle and in dungeons, thousands were driven into the water, like so many beasts, and knocked on the head or shot if they attempted to swim for their lives; others were dragged through the water with ropes about their necks; others buried alive; others hung up by the arms, and gradually slashed to death, to see how many blows an Englishman would endure before he died; women were ripped up—their children were thrown to the swine to be devoured before their eyes, or, being taken up by the heels, had their brains dashed out against trees; while others were found in the

Suffice it to add, that at the first outbreak of the rebellion, according to the lowest computation, forty thousand, while according to other accounts, currently believed at the time, no less than between two and three hundred thousand altogether, fell victims to the vengeance of popery.*

When the tidings of this massacre reached Scotland, Charles was in Edinburgh, endeavouring to conciliate the Scots, in the hope of obtaining their aid against the English parliament. With this view he sanctioned all their proceedings against episcopacy, and even ratified the acts of the Glasgow assembly—concessions for which he has been severely censured by some historians, and of which he himself is said to have repented; and yet these very writers, while they allow that he was forced by circumstances into these concessions, and never meant

fields sucking the breasts of their murdered mothers, and without mercy buried alive. Multitudes were enclosed in houses, which being set on fire, they were miserably consumed in the flames, or cut to pieces on attempting to escape! These fearful butcheries, accompanied with the most hellish blasphemies and imprecations on the part of the murderers, and the most heart-rending shrieks and lamentations from their terrified victims, present a scene unparalleled in British history, and only next in horror to the massacre of St. Bartholomew in France.

* Sir John Temple's *History of the Irish Rebellion*; Brodie's *Hist. of the British Empire*, iii. 109; Reid's *Hist. of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland*, i. 308–336.—Dr. Reid says, "It is vain to hope to discover the exact number of protestant sufferers during the first or earliest stage of the rebellion. Suffice it to say, that the lowest probable computation presents an awful sacrifice of human life." We consider forty thousand a very moderate computation indeed, if not "the lowest probable," in estimating the number involved in a massacre which so many writers have calculated at hundreds of thousands, which almost depopulated the northern counties of Ireland, and which continued, with brief intermission, to rage for two years. Clarendon, who was not likely to put the matter in the worst light for the papists, tells us that "about forty or fifty thousand of the English protestants were murdered before they suspected themselves to be in any danger;" and that "*an incredible number* were destroyed." (*Clar. Hist.*, ii. 299.)

to give them effect, are loud in their condemnation of the Scots, for not giving him credit for his good intentions, and for taking part with the English parliament in the subsequent struggles ! But the charge is as absurd as it is disingenuous. For how could they expect the peaceable enjoyment of their own discipline, so long as Charles continued to wage war with his parliament—a war instigated by the counsels of the avowed enemies of the presbyterians, and plainly designed to establish arbitrary power ? The duplicity of the king, and his attachment to prelacy, were too well known to encourage them to place much reliance on professions which, made only in the hour of his need, would be too easily revoked in the event of his success. From the triumph of Charles in such a contest they had nothing to expect but revenge; their only hope, as presbyterians and as patriots, lay in the success of the English parliament.

This parliament, so well known in history by the name of the long parliament, has been loaded with such uniform and indiscriminating abuse, that it may surprise our readers to learn that, during the first years of its history, it consisted of independent gentlemen of the most unblemished reputation, and of whom Clarendon himself is obliged to say, “ As to religion, they were all members of the established church, and almost to a man for episcopal government. Though they were undevoted enough to the court, they had all imaginable duty to the king, and affection for the government established by law or ancient custom; and without doubt, the majority of that body were persons of gravity and wisdom, who, being possessed of great and plentiful fortunes, had no mind to break the peace of the kingdom, or to

make any considerable alterations of the government of the church or state.”*

It would be interesting to trace the steps by which the public mind of England was gradually prepared for the complete extirpation of the hierarchy. Neal ascribes it to the arrogance of the prelates, who, instead of being content, like their predecessors, with an acknowledgment of the lawfulness of their office, began to plead for its divine right; “and as the parliament increased in power, the puritans stiffened in their demands, till all methods of accommodation were impracticable.”† But he conceals the fact, which could be easily proved from other writers, that the great body of the English puritans, including under this term many of the established clergy, had long been decidedly presbyterian in their sentiments. At no period of our history was the subject of church government so thoroughly discussed. It became the all-engrossing topic of the day; and it is computed that, on this controversy alone, there issued from the press, between 1640 and 1660, no fewer than 30,000 pamphlets. The question, from its close connection with public affairs, soon became a national one; the trial of archbishop Laud brought out sad disclosures; public feeling ran every day higher against the prelates; and at last the parliament, deeply sensible of the necessity of some reform in the English church, summoned an assembly of divines to meet at Westminster on the 1st of July 1643, for the purpose of taking this subject into their serious deliberation. To aid them in this object, they invited the general assembly of the Scottish church to send up some of their number as

* Clarendon, i. 184. † Neal's History of the Puritans, ii. 409.

commissioners; and they resolved to sympathize with the Scots, by co-operating with them in the cause of liberty and reformation.

Every step taken by the English parliament was viewed with intense interest in Scotland. It appears from the correspondence carried on during the treaty in 1640 and 1641, between the English and Scottish commissioners, hitherto unpublished, that even at that early period the Scots contemplated, and earnestly pleaded for, a uniformity in doctrine, worship, discipline, and government, between the two churches of England and Scotland. Their primary motive in making this proposal was certainly to secure the peaceable enjoyment of their own form, which, they knew, could not be expected so long as the two churches continued so much divided. At a time when religion was such a governing principle both over rulers and subjects, they held that "unity in religion" was the only effectual cure for the civil dissensions by which the country was rent asunder. But they had still nobler motives for such a uniformity. While they disclaimed all intentions of dictating terms of union, they could not fail to see, and seeing, to avail themselves of the opportunity of promoting, the interests of truth, and extending to their brethren in England the blessings of a purer worship and more scriptural form of polity. "We have not been so forgetful," they say, "of ourselves, who are the lesser, and of England, which is the greater kingdom, as to suffer any such presumptuous thoughts, to enter into our minds. Yet charity is no presumption, and the common duty of charity bindeth all Christians at all times both to pray and profess their desire that all others were not only almost but alto-

gether such as themselves, except their afflictions and distresses." "This unity of religion," they add, "shall make ministers to build the church with both their hands, whereas now the one hand is holden out for opposition against the other party; and shall turn the many unpleasant labours of writing and reading of unprofitable controversies into treatises of mortification and studies of devotion. It is a thing so desirable, that all sound divines and politicians are for it; and as we conceive so pious a work to be worthy the best consideration, so we are earnest in recommending it to your lordships, that it may be brought before his majesty and the parliament, as that which, *without forcing of conscience*, seemeth not only to be a possible but an easy work." They then proceed, with great modesty, to suggest a reformation in the English church, concluding with a recommendation, that it "be peaceably governed by churchmen in assemblies; and the state, in parliament and council, governed by civil men and not by churchmen; thus the work shall be better done; the means that uphold their unprofitable pomp may supply the wants of many preaching ministers, and, without the smallest loss to the subjects, may be a great increase to his majesty's revenues; his majesty's authority shall be more deeply rooted in the united hearts, and more strongly guarded by the joint forces, of his subjects; and his greatness shall be enlarged abroad, by becoming the head of all the protestants in Europe, to the greater terror of his enemies, and securing of greatness to his posterity and royal succession."*

* Copies of letters and other documents relating to Scotland, 1640-41 MS., in my possession.

Whatever may be thought of the sound policy of these sentiments, it must be allowed that the design was a noble one; that the plan was sublimely comprehensive; that the spirit in which it was proposed was truly Christian, enlightened, and catholic; and that these are the last men who deserve to be branded as traitors and rebels. Let us at least do them the tardy justice of admitting, that had their pious wishes been fulfilled, it is possible that our country might not have been seen, as it is at this day, inflamed with intestine discords, and emitting a thousand fiery particles of dissent, that threaten a universal conflagration.

The English parliament, when these propositions were first made, were not prepared to adopt them throughout; but when, in August 1642, the royal standard was raised at Nottingham, and the country involved in civil war, they began to see the necessity of acting on them, and to court an alliance with the Scots. And yet, deeply as our fathers sympathized with the proceedings of the parliament, it was not without a severe struggle, and not till every effort had been tried, and tried in vain, to effect a reconciliation, that they were compelled, as a last resource, to join with the parliament in maintaining the liberties of the country. "Necessity," said Henderson, in a speech to the English parliament, September 1643, "necessity, which hath in it a kind of sovereignty, and is a law above all laws, and therefore is said to have no law, doth mightily press the church and kingdom of Scotland at this time. It is no small comfort to them that they have not been idle and at ease, but have used all good and lawful means, by supplications and remonstrances to his majesty, for quench-

ing the combustion in this kingdom; and after all these, that they sent commissioners to his majesty, humbly to mediate for a reconciliation. But the offer of their humble services was rejected, from no other reason but that they had no warrant nor capacity for such a mediation; and that the intermixture of the government of the church of England with the civil government of the kingdom was such a mystery as could not be understood by them." In these circumstances, his majesty having denied the Scots a parliament, they were compelled to call a convention of the estates, to deliberate on the perilous aspect of matters in the country; and commissioners having been sent from the English parliament, their consultations issued in a solemn league and covenant between the three kingdoms, "as the only mean, after all others have been essayed, for the deliverance of England and Ireland out of the depths of affliction, preservation of the church and kingdom of Scotland from the extremity of misery, and the safety of our native king and his kingdom from destruction and desolation."

The general assembly which met in Edinburgh, August, 1643, was rendered remarkable by the presence of the English commissioners, and the formation of this solemn league between England, Ireland, and Scotland. This assembly met in the New Church aisle of St. Giles', which was then first fitted up for their reception, and in which, till within a few years ago, the assembly continued to meet. In the prospect of the important discussions to come before them, all eyes were again turned to Henderson, and he was a third time called to the moderator's chair. On the 7th of August, the long-expected English

commissioners, who came by sea, arrived in Edinburgh. Four of them, Sir William Armyn, Sir Harry Vane, Mr. Hatcher, and Mr. Darley, appeared for the parliament; and two ministers, Mr. Steven Marshall, a presbyterian, and Mr. Philip Nye, an independent, appeared for the assembly of divines. The arrival of these gentlemen at such a crisis, excited a thrilling interest through the whole community, of which we, in present circumstances, can hardly form a conception. Trembling for their liberties, which they conceived, and with too good reason, to be involved in the struggle now maintained in England; alarmed by the discovery of new popish plots, and by constant rumours of wars, massacres, and victories, they hailed the appearance of these strangers, as the family of Noah did that of the dove with the olive branch, and fondly augured from it the cessation of the national deluge. The general assembly, at that time the watchful sentinel of the liberties of the country, welcomed them with heartfelt enthusiasm, regarding their visit as the omen of that religious as well as civil union with England for which they had so long thirsted and prayed. Henderson cautioned his brethren to conduct themselves, now that the eyes of strangers were upon them, with even more than their ordinary decorum; and a deputation of ministers and elders was appointed to wait on the commissioners, and courteously to invite them to the assembly. Yet such was their care to avoid even the appearance of introducing civil matters, that, while the Englishmen were cordially granted free access as spectators, they were courteously requested, in any transactions with them as commissioners, to retire to a loft of the New

Church adjoining the assembly room, where the correspondence between them and the assembly would be conducted.

It was at first intended, by some at least of the English, that there should be merely a civil league between the two kingdoms, pledging themselves to mutual support against the common enemy; but through the influence and arguments of Henderson, in which he was supported by the whole assembly, and powerfully aided by the critical circumstances in which England was placed, it was agreed that there should also be a religious union, cemented by the three kingdoms entering into a solemn league and covenant. Henderson presented the draught of one which he had composed to a meeting of the three committees, from the parliament of England, the Scottish convention of estates, and the general assembly, which, after some slight alterations, they adopted. On the moderator producing it, the effect was quite electrifying. "When the draught was read to the general assembly," says Mr. Blair, who witnessed the scene, "our smoking desires for uniformity did break forth into a vehement flame, and it was so heartily embraced, and with such a torrent of affectionate expressions, as none but eye and ear witnesses can conceive. When the vote of some old ministers was asked, their joy was so great that tears did interrupt their expressions."* The covenant was received with the same cordiality by the convention of estates.

In the month of September 1643, the city of London witnessed a spectacle equally interesting, but to Englishmen much more novel and extraordinary.

* *Memoirs of the Life of Blair*, p. 98.

On the 25th of that month, both houses of parliament, with the assembly of divines, and the Scottish commissioners, met in St. Margaret's Church, Westminster. After divine service, the solemn league was read, article by article, in the pulpit, from a parchment roll, the whole assembly standing uncovered, and swearing to it with their hands lifted up to heaven. On this solemn occasion, our countryman, Mr. Henderson, delivered an animated address, in which he warmly recommended the duty as pleasing to God, exemplified in other kingdoms and churches, and often accompanied with the most blessed fruits. "Had the pope at Rome the knowledge of what is doing this day in England," he said in conclusion, "and were this covenant written on the plaster of the wall over against him, where he sitteth, Belshazzar-like, in his sacrilegious pomp, it would make his heart to tremble, his countenance to change, his head and mitre to shake, his joints to loose, and all his cardinals and prelates to be astonished. The word of God is for it, as you have been now resolved, by the testimony of a reverend assembly of so many godly, learned, and great divines. In your own sense and experience you will find, that although, while you are assaulted with worldly cares and fears, your thoughts may somewhat trouble you; yet at other times, when, upon seeking God in private or public, as in the evening of a well-spent Sabbath, your disposition is more spiritual, and leaving the world behind you, you have found access unto God, through Jesus Christ, the bent of your hearts will be strongest to go through with this work. It is a good testimony that our designs and ways are agreeable to God, if we affect them most when our hearts are

farthest from the world, and our temper is most spiritual and heavenly, and least carnal and earthly. As the word of God, so the prayers of the people of God in all the reformed churches are for us, and on our side. *It were more terrible than an army, to hear that there were any fervent supplications to God against us.* Blasphemies, curses, and horrid imprecations there be, proceeding from another spirit, and that is all.”*

The solemn league having been thus adopted by the English parliament, was sent back to Edinburgh, where it was ordained by the commission of the church and the committee of estates to be sworn and subscribed throughout the kingdom—the former enjoining it under ecclesiastical censures, and the latter under pain of being punished as enemies to his majesty’s honour and the peace of these kingdoms.

It may be proper here to say a few words respecting a deed which exercised such an important influence on the destinies of the church and the nation. In this covenant our fathers bound themselves and their posterity, *first*, to endeavour the preservation of the reformed religion in the church of Scotland, the reformation of religion in England and Ireland, “according to the word of God and the example of the best reformed churches,” and the bringing of the three churches to the nearest possible conjunction and uniformity in religion; *secondly*, to the extirpation of popery and prelacy; *thirdly*, to the preservation of the rights of parliament, of the liberties of the kingdoms, and of his majesty’s person and

* Two speeches delivered before the subscribing of the covenant, the 25th of September, at St. Margaret’s, in Westminster—the one by Mr. Philip Nye, the other by Mr. Alexander Henderson. 1643.

authority; and, *lastly*, they pledge themselves to personal reformation, and a holy life. Our limits prevent us from entering on a lengthened vindication of this covenant from the numerous objections that have been brought against it. It is hardly necessary to expose the vulgar prejudice, which, taking advantage of a term now become obnoxious, would identify the *extirpation* of popery and prelacy with the extirpation of the *persons* of papists and prelatists. The only points of objection worthy of notice, are the mixture of things sacred and civil in the same bond, and the enjoining of it under civil penalties. The same answer may suffice for both, and is to be found in the extraordinary circumstances in which our ancestors were placed. A combined attack having been made upon their civil rights and their religious liberties, it became warrantable, and even necessary, to unite both in their means of defence. So far as it can be shown that, in any case, they resorted to violence to enforce the covenant, we do not vindicate them; but indeed it cannot be proved that it was forced upon any, or that civil injury was incurred by any for simply refusing it. The truth is, that the great body of the people of all ranks entered with heart and soul into the solemn pledge; and the acts of the church and the state enjoining it, if candidly interpreted and compared with the commentary of their practice, will be found to have been nothing more than a judicial sanction of the measure, with a formal intimation that the church would hold its opponents as enemies to religion, and that the state would regard them as enemies to the liberties of the country. But whatever errors or excesses may have characterized the mode in which it was

managed by men, the work itself may nevertheless have been of God; and if the matter of that covenant was agreeable to the divine will, if the nation voluntarily entered into this solemn engagement with the Lord of hosts, it will not be easy to show that either lapse of time or change of circumstances could dissolve the obligation. Nations as such, in the eye of reason as well as scripture, possess a permanent identity in all the stages of their history, and are, equally with individuals, the subjects of God's moral government. Since, therefore, the three kingdoms were brought, in the good providence of God, to swear allegiance to him, as well as amity to each other, they could not draw back without perjury; and the serious conclusion is, that in all their subsequent departures from the reformation thus so solemnly covenanted, their sinful conduct is aggravated by the guilt of having broken their vows to the Most High God.*

It has been repeatedly asserted that the Independent party in the English parliament outwitted our Scottish divines, by getting the clause inserted in the covenant which binds them to reform the church of England "according to the word of God;" by which, it is said, they tacitly understood independency, while the Scots understood it of their beloved presbytery. We have already seen that, if there was any address shown in the concoction of the league, the praise is due to the Scots, who succeeded in getting more than they ever expected from the English, when they prevailed on them to make it a religious as well as civil bond. They certainly understood presbytery to be the system most agreeable to

* Sermons on Unity of the Church, by Dr. M'Crie, Appendix.

the word of God, and to the example of the best reformed churches; but it is quite a mistake to suppose that they were "taken in" by Sir Harry Vane, or artfully led to expect the conformity of England as the bribe for their assistance. The truth is, our ancestors entered into this league with England rather in the hope, and with the desire, that they might be brought into a nearer conformity with the presbyterian discipline, than with any sanguine expectation of seeing this accomplished. They never supposed that England would submit to their polity, without some alteration suited to their circumstances, and accordingly they joined with them in constructing a new Confession and Directory. "We are not to conceive," says Henderson, in a letter dated 1642, "that they will embrace our form. A new form must be set down for us all. And although we should never come to this unity in religion and uniformity of worship, yet my desire is to see what form England shall pitch upon before we publish ours."* In short, nothing is more apparent, from the whole of their correspondence, than that they went up to the Westminster assembly with very slender hopes of being able to prevail on the English to submit to presbytery; and the result filled their hearts with unfeigned astonishment, as well as gratitude to that God whose hand they constantly recognised in all their proceedings. "The seven years of ensuing providence," says Henderson, in the dedication of a sermon preached in 1644, "may carry us as far beyond the present intentions, whether of the enemies of religion or our own, as the seven years past have done *beyond our former*

* Baillie's Letters, MS., ii. 305.

intentions and theirs. The pulling down of popery in the Christian world, and the pulling down of prelacy in Britain, are equally feasible to the Almighty, who delighteth to turn our difficulties and impossibilities into the glorious demonstrations of his divine power, and who putteth motions into the hearts of men, which they turn into petitions and endeavours, and God, by his power, bringeth forth into reality and action: the conception, birth, and perfection is all from himself."

But it is time to take some notice of the labours of our Scottish ministers in the Westminster assembly. This famous assembly was convened, as we have seen, by the parliament on the 1st July 1643. It was to consist of 120 divines, with 30 lay assessors, of whom 10 were lords and 20 were commoners. The divines were, for the most part, clergymen of the church of England, selected not for their peculiar views on the point of church government, but for their well-known learning, piety, and abilities. Some of them were keen advocates of prelacy, but these, so soon as they saw how matters were likely to be carried, retired from the assembly. A convocation of more grave, judicious, and learned divines, was never, perhaps, collected in Christendom. Their theological writings, which still continue to be standard works, amply confirm this commendation; and, above all, "the Westminster Standards," as presbyterians have denominated the Confession of Faith, Larger and Shorter Catechisms, and other formularies of the church of Scotland, which were the result of their labours, would be alone sufficient to entitle their memory to the veneration and respect of all who love the truth.

The parliament of England having solicited the general assembly to send up some of their number as commissioners, four ministers were appointed—Alexander Henderson, Samuel Rutherford, Robert Baillie, and George Gillespie. With these were associated the following elders: the earl of Cassilis, lord Maitland, and sir Archibald Johnston of Wariston. Our worthy commissioners reached London in November 1643, and, on being introduced to the assembly at Westminster, were cordially welcomed by a speech from Dr. Twisse, their learned and excellent prolocutor. The following description of the appearance of the assembly, as it presented itself to our commissioners, from the pen of Mr. Baillie, is given in his usual homely and graphic style: “The like of that assembly I did never see, and, as we hear say, the like was never in England, nor any where is shortly like to be. Here no mortal man may enter to see or hear, let be to sit, without an order in writ from both houses of parliament. They did sit in Henry the Seventh’s Chapel, in the place of the convocation; but since the weather grew cold, they did go to the Jerusalem chamber, a fair room in the Abbey of Westminster, about the bounds of the college fore-hall, but wider. At the upmost end there is a chair set on a frame, a foot from the earth, for the Mr. Prolocutor, Dr. Twisse. Before it, on the ground, stand two chairs for the two Mr. Assessors, Dr. Burgess, and Mr. White. Before these two chairs, through the length of the room, stands a table, at which sit the two scribes, Mr. Byfield and Mr. Roborough. The house is all well hung, and has a good fire, which is some dainties at London. Foranent the table, upon the prolocutor’s right hand,

there are three or four ranks of forms; on the lowest we five do sit; upon the others, at our backs, the members of parliament deputed to the assembly. On the forms foranent us, on the prolocutor's left hand, are four or five stages of forms, ranged round the room, whereupon their divines sit as they please. We meet every day of the week but Saturday. We sit commonly from nine to one or two afternoon. The prolocutor, at the beginning and end, has a short prayer. Ordinarily there will be present above three score of their divines. After the prayer, the scribe reads the proposition and scriptures, whereupon the assembly debates in a most grave and orderly way."*

The Scottish commissioners soon found ample employment. After the labours of the day in the assembly, they were engaged in committees, or in writing letters and pamphlets, till the midnight chimes at Westminster rung them to bed. They had no conception that they would have been so long detained in London, for the assembly continued to sit, with little intermission, for nearly *five* years. The chief burden of the debates fell upon our divines, who were harassed by them night and day. Many an anxious look did they cast towards home; and often did they plead that they might be allowed to return to their quiet duties in their own parishes; but duty to the church and nation forbade it. "Many a perplexed night have we of it," says Baillie; "if our neighbours at Edinburgh tasted the sauce wherein we dip our venison, their teeth would not water so fast to be here as some of them do."

* Baillie's Letters and Journals, ii. 107, 108.

The first subject that came before the assembly, and which occupied the greater part of their time, was the thorny question of church government. Our Scots ministers soon found, to their high satisfaction, that the great body of the assembly was favourably disposed to the presbyterian discipline. And had the matter been left to the mere force of numbers, little time would have sufficed to decide it. Out of an assembly of seventy or eighty members, there were only five independents, and one or two erastians. In this insignificant minority, however, there were two or three possessed of considerable talents for public speaking and ingenuity in debate, and they continued to take up the assembly's time, by pertinaciously disputing every point, and protesting against every decision. The assembly, anxious for unanimity, bore all this with astonishing patience. The independents occupied them no less than *three weeks* in debating the point of sitting at a communion table. "The unhappy independents," says Baillie, "would mangle that sacrament. No catechising nor preparation before; no thanksgiving after; no sacramental doctrine or chapters in the day of celebration; no coming up to any table, but a carrying of the elements to all in their seats athort the church: yet all this, with God's help, we have carried over them to our practice. We must dispute every inch of ground. Great need had we of the prayers of all God's people." This obstinacy was the less justifiable in the independents, as the Scottish ministers had agreed to drop several of their ancient practices in order to please them.

Many days were spent on the question of ruling elders. But the most important and lengthened de-

bate in this assembly was regarding the divine right of presbyterial government. The question was, Whether many congregations may, and by divine institution ought, to be under one presbyterial government? After a debate which occupied thirty days, the divine right of presbytery was carried by an overwhelming majority. Five independents* entered their dissent, and, as is usual with the losing party, complained of unfair usage. But never was the charge made with less feasibility. The length of time during which the discussion was protracted shows that ample opportunity had been given them to bring forward their objections; and the debate which was afterwards published at length, proves how ably and fairly they had been met. It is remarkable that, notwithstanding the earnest desires of the assembly, and their own promises, the independents, though they were constantly finding fault with the presbyterial form, would never present any model of their own in its place.†

In these debates our countrymen took an active and important share. To the masterly management and sagacious counsels of Henderson, the assembly owed, in a great measure, the happy unanimity which prevailed among them. To the services of George Gillespie, who was then in the prime of life, his colleague, Mr. Baillie, bears repeated testimony.

* The names of "the dissenting brethren" were Messrs. Goodwin, Nye, Simpson, Burroughs, and Bridge.

† Baillie's Letters, ii. 27, 33, 172, &c. Reasons presented by the Dissenting Brethren (Independents) against Presbyterial Government, 1648. Answer of the Assembly of Divines to the Reasons, &c., 1648. Papers for Accommodation, 1644, printed 1648. Reasons by the Dissenting Brethren for not giving in a Model of their way. Answer of the Assembly to said Reasons, 1645. Answer to the Apologetical Narration, &c.

"None in all the assembly did reason more pertinently than Mr. Gillespie; he is an excellent youth; my heart blesses God in his behalf. I admire his gifts, and bless God, as for all my colleagues, so for him in particular, as equal in these to the first in the assembly." On arriving in London, Gillespie went straight to the assembly, and stood behind the crowd, while Goodwin was pleading the cause of independency. He was observed by Henderson, who mentioned his arrival to the prolocutor; and Gillespie was requested to come forward and reply. In vain he pleaded to be excused—he was obliged to come forward, making his way through the crowd in his travelling boots; and, deeply blushing, he commenced a speech which occupied an hour and a half, and ended in a triumphant demolition of the independent's logic. On another occasion, when the parliament and assembly had met for conference on the much-contested question of church order, an elaborate discourse was delivered by the learned Selden in favour of *erastianism*, which subjects the church to the state in the administration of discipline—a doctrine highly pleasing to the parliament at that time. Mr. Gillespie, who appeared busily engaged in taking notes of the speech, was requested by his brethren, who well knew his talents, to stand up and answer it. He at first modestly refused. "Rise, George," said one of his friends; "rise up and defend the right of the Lord Jesus Christ to govern, by his own laws, the church which he has purchased with his blood." He complied, and, after giving a summary of the arguments of his antagonist, he confuted them, to the admiration of all present. Selden himself is said to have observed, in as-

tonishment, "This young man, by his single speech, has swept away the learning and labour of my life." On looking at Gillespie's notes, it was found that he had written nothing but "*Da lucem Domine*—Lord, give light," and similar brief petitions for divine direction.*

The same modest and devout spirit characterized his last moments. Mr. Gillespie died in 1648, in his thirty-sixth year. During his last sickness he enjoyed little sensible assurance, but was strong in "the faith of adherence," clinging to the promises of God. When asked if he felt comfort, he replied "No; but though the Lord has not allowed me comfort, I shall yet believe that 'my beloved is mine, and I am his.'" "Brother," said one of the ministers who stood around his bed, "you are taken away from evil times; what advice have you to give to us who are left behind?" He replied, that he had little experience in the ministry, having been only nine years a minister; "but," he added, "I have this to say, that I have got infinitely more in my work from prayer than from study, and know much more help from the assistance of the Spirit than from books." "And yet it is well known," says Wodrow, "that he was an indefatigable student."†

Having finished the discussion as to government, and the Directory for Worship, the Confession of Faith and the Catechisms next occupied the attention of the assembly. These, however, though they cost much labour, excited less controversy. The first draught of the Confession was prepared chiefly by our Scots commissioners, but it is hardly possible now to state what share individuals had in it.

* Wodrow's *Analecta*, Adv. Lib.

† Ibid.

It is generally believed that the Shorter Catechism was drawn up by Dr. Arrowsmith. The following character of this distinguished man is given by one who appears to have been well acquainted with him: "He was a burning and a shining light, who, by his indefatigable study of the sublime mysteries of the gospel, spent himself to the utmost to explicate the darkest places of scripture. He was a holy and learned divine; firm and zealous in his attachment to the cause of Christ, from which no worldly allurements would shake his faith, or move his confidence. He was a man of a thousand. His soul aspired after more than his weak and sickly body was able to perform."*

When the Confession of Faith and the Catechisms were agreed to, the Scottish commissioners took leave of the Westminster assembly, and, after an absence of about four years, returned to Scotland, and gave an account of their proceedings to the general assembly which met in August 1647. This assembly, of which Mr. Robert Douglas was moderator, is memorable in our history for having received the Westminster Confession of Faith as a part of the uniformity of religion to which the three kingdoms had become bound in the solemn league. The only reservation which they made in approving of this Confession, was in regard to the authority of the magistrate in calling assemblies, ascribed to him in the 31st chapter, which they understood "only of churches not settled in point of government;" assert-

* Brook's *Lives of the Puritans*, iii. 317. Baillie informs us that Dr. Arrowsmith was "a man with a glass eye, in place of that which was put out by an arrow; a learned divine, on whom the assembly put the writing against the antinomians." (Vol. i., 414.)

ing their freedom "to assemble together synodically, as well *pro re nata* as at the ordinary times, upon delegation from the churches, by the intrinsical power received from Christ, as often as it is necessary for the good of the church so to assemble." This explanation was necessary, in consequence of the erastian principles which had now begun to prevail in the English parliament, and to hinder them from settling the discipline of the church. Whatever construction might be put upon those parts of the Confession by the rulers, the assembly thus declared the sense in which they "understood" them. This act still remains in force, and is prefixed to all our copies of the Confession—a standing memorial of the jealousy with which the church of Scotland watched over her spiritual independence as a church of Christ.* We may here state, once for all, that the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, Propositions for Church Government, and the Directory for Public Worship, which had been drawn up by the Westminster assembly, in conjunction with the commissioners from the church of Scotland, were also received, approved, and ratified by the general assembly, in several acts relating to them, as "parts of the covenanted uniformity." These acts of approbation by the church were afterwards ratified by the estates in parliament; and thus, so far as Scotland was concerned, the stipulations of the solemn league were cordially and honourably fulfilled.

Presbyterianism may be now said to have gained

* The famous Hundred and Eleven Propositions, drawn up by order of the general assembly in 1645, in which the respective powers about religious matters belonging to magistrates and ministers are defined with admirable clearness and precision, must be studied in order to understand those parts of the Confession of Faith which refer to this subject.

the ascendancy, not only in Scotland, but in England and Ireland. The assembly of divines, called by the English parliament to settle a platform of doctrine, worship, and government, in which all the three kingdoms might unite, had, with a few exceptions, agreed to a set of standards which met with the entire and cordial approbation of the church of Scotland. The presbyterians had a powerful party in the English parliament; and the vast body of the English clergy had become decidedly presbyterian in their sentiments. There cannot be a stronger proof of this than the fact, that on the restoration of Charles II., no fewer than *two thousand* ministers, most of whom had previously been episcopal, were in one day ejected from their charges, and silenced for nonconformity; and when so many were found willing to suffer for conscience' sake, we may conceive that there would be a still greater number who, though they conformed to the episcopal government, would have remained contented with the presbyterian, had it become the established religion.

In 1646, the parliament, urged on by the Westminster assembly, by petitions from various parts of England, and the strenuous exhortations of the Scottish church, granted a partial establishment to presbytery. The church of England, instead of so many dioceses, was now divided into *provinces*, each of which was to hold a provincial assembly, made up of representatives from the several presbyteries or *classes*, as they were called, within the boundary; and a proper subordination of judicatories was arranged, the supreme court being a national assembly, to be formed of deputies from the various provincial assemblies. It is true, indeed, that this

arrangement took full effect only in London and Lancashire; and that, though the ministers held meetings for church affairs in various other counties, they did not enjoy the civil sanction.* Most of the pulpits, however, were filled with presbyterian ministers, who alone enjoyed the benefices, and continued to do so till the restoration; they also held the chief places in the universities; and, in short, presbyterianism was considered the established form of religion in England.

The same success attended the cause of presbytery in Ireland. In 1644, the solemn league had been administered to the protestants in that country by four ministers deputed by the general assembly of the church of Scotland. The manner in which these ministers executed their commission was highly praiseworthy. Not the shadow of constraint was employed. The officers and soldiers, and the Irish inhabitants in general, with all the enthusiasm of the national character, welcomed the covenant. It was carefully explained to them, before they were admitted to swear it; and the only complaint was, that the ministers were "over scrupulous" in admitting persons to subscribe. "The covenant was taken in all places," says an Irish writer of these times, "with great affection: partly sorrow for former judgments, and sins, and miseries; partly joy, in the hopes of laying a foundation for the work of God in the land, and overthrowing popery and prelacy, which had been the bane and ruin of that poor church. Sighs and tears were joined together. Indeed, they were assisted with more than the ordinary presence of God in that work in every place they went to; so

* Baxter's History of his Life and Times, abridged by Calamy. i. 85.

England, she found herself, strange to say, engaged in the same contest with the long parliament.

The grand point which the English presbyterians sought to gain in this parliament was a civil sanction to the *divine right* of presbyterial government; in other words, an acknowledgment that it was the government appointed by Christ in his word. By maintaining, in this sense, the divine right of their form of polity, the presbyterians did no more than what both prelatists and independents did in behalf of their respective models. It was not the subordinate arrangements, but the grand essential principles of presbytery, that they held to be of divine appointment. Their great object was, to prevail on the parliament to sanction some *certain form* of church government; and though presbyterianism appeared to them the most scriptural, many would have preferred a moderate episcopacy to the anarchy and confusion in which the church then stood.* But the parliament saw that, if they sanctioned this principle without any modification, they would strip themselves of all control over the church; for it was an essential principle of presbytery that the church possessed intrinsic powers wholly independent of the state. They determined, therefore, to oppose the presbyterians in this matter. The independents and other sectaries, afraid that, if the independence of the church were sanctioned by the state, they would not obtain *toleration*, concurred with the erastians in refusing to acknowledge the principle. The lawyers, who, if not the most numerous, were the most active and loquacious portion of this parliament, were almost to a man, as might be expected

* Calamy's Abridgment of Baxter's Life, i. 81.

from their profession, against acknowledging the intrinsic authority of the church.

It is worth while, in passing, to vindicate the English presbyterians from the misrepresentation and abuse with which they have been assailed, from almost every quarter, for their conduct, or rather their designs, at this period of their history. "The presbyterians," says Neal, in his "History of the Puritans," "were now in the height of their power, the hierarchy being destroyed, and the best, if not all the livings in the kingdom, being distributed among them; yet still they were dissatisfied for want of the *top-stone* to their new building, which was *church power*; the pulpits and conversation of the city were filled with invectives against the men in power, because they would not leave the church independent on the state." Again: "The presbyterian hierarchy was as narrow as the *prelatical*; and as it did not allow a liberty of conscience, claiming a civil as well as ecclesiastical authority over men's persons and properties, it was equally, if not more intolerable." Similar charges pervade the whole of Neal's History, and they have been repeated by writers of all different persuasions—prelatical, infidel, and sectarian. "Presbyterianism," says another writer, "displayed the same intolerance as episcopacy had done. Religious tyranny subsists in various degrees. Popery is the consummation of it, and presbyterianism a weak degree of it. But the latter has in it the essence of the former, and differs from it only as a musket differs from a cannon."*

* Toulmin, in his edition of Neal.—It is with regret that we are compelled to class with these writers, our historiographer, Mr. Brodie, who, while he advocates latitudinarian views of church government, with a leaning to independency, joins in the sweeping censures of other histo-

Now, what was this *church power* which the presbyterians were so anxious to secure, and which Neal would represent as "a civil authority over men's persons and properties?" Will it be believed, that it was neither more nor less than the power of *keeping back scandalous and unworthy persons from the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper?* This was, in fact, the great point in dispute between them and the parliament; for the parliament had insisted on having the supreme power in ecclesiastical matters, and had passed a law to the effect that if any person was refused admission to sealing ordinances by the church courts, he could appeal to parliament, which might, by virtue of its authority, compel the church courts to receive him, whatever his character might be. The presbyterians, as Neal himself admits, "were dissatisfied with the men in power, because they would not leave the church independent on the state." And would Mr. Neal, himself an independent, have had the church to be *dependent on the state?* Would he have had the presbyterians tamely submit the royal prerogatives of Christ to a parliament, after they had succeeded in wresting them from a monarch, against whom, for this very reason, the nation had long been engaged in a hazardous and sanguinary war?*

But the real intentions of the presbyterians must be rians on the presbyterians. (*Hist. of the British Empire*, iii. 501-513.) Mr. Brodie considers it sufficient to state as his authority: "For all, see Baillie's Letters, vol. ii.," without quoting any particular passage, or appearing to have compared the several passages with each other.

* Neal asserts that "the independents claimed a like power" (the same power of the keys, or of church government, as the presbyterians) "for the brotherhood of every particular congregation, but without any civil sanctions or penalties, annexed." (*Hist. of Puritans*, iii. 260, Toulmin's edit.) We have seen that the claim of the presbyterians to a divine right had nothing to do with civil pains or penalties; but let the independents speak for themselves: "To the magistrate's power we give as much

judged of from their own writings, with some of which Neal seems to have been unacquainted, and to others of which he had no access.* “In the assembly,” says Baillie, writing in 1646, “we are fallen on a faschious proposition, that has kept us divers days *to oppose the erastian heresy*, which in this land is very strong, especially among the lawyers, unhappy members of this parliament. We find it necessary to say, ‘that Christ, in the New Testament, has institute a church government distinct from the civil, to be exercised by the officers of the church, without commission from the magistrate.’ None in the assembly (Westminster) has any doubt of this truth but one Colman, a professed erastian—a man reasonably learned, but stupid and inconsiderate, half a pleasant (half-crazy), and of small estimation. But the lawyers in the parliament, making it their work to spoil our presbytery, not so much upon *conscience*, as upon fear that the presbytery *spoil their market, and take up most of the country pleas without law*, did blow up the poor man with much vanity, so he is become their champion. We give him a free and fair hearing; albeit we fear, when we have answered all, the houses, when it comes to them, shall scrape it out of the Confession; for *this point is their idol*. The pope and king were never more earnest for the headship of the church than the plurality of this parliament. Although they are like for a time by violence to carry it, yet almost all the ministry are zealous for the prerogative of Christ.” In another letter (1645), he says:

and, as we think, MORE than the principles of the presbyterian government will suffer them to yield.” (*Apologetical Narration by the Five Dissenting Bräthren*, p. 19.)

* Baillie's Letters had not been published when Neal wrote his history.

“The most part of the house of commons, especially the lawyers, are either half or whole erastians, believing no church government to be of divine right, but all to be a human constitution, *depending on the will of the magistrate*. About this matter we have had, at divers times, much bickering with them. Our advice to them” (i.e., the advice of the Scots to the English ministers) “was, that they would go on to set up their presbyteries and synods with so much power as they could get; and after they were once settled, they might then strive to obtain their full due power. But the synod (Westminster assembly) was in another mind, and at last they framed a most zealous, clear, and peremptory paper, wherein they held out plainly the church’s *divine right to keep off from the sacrament all who were scandalous*; and if they cannot obtain the free exercise of THAT POWER which Christ hath given them, *they will lay down their charges, and will rather choose all afflictions, than to sin by profaning the holy table.*”*

And these are the men who are represented as dissatisfied because they could not get the *civil* power into their hands! To sneer at such men for not being contented with having obtained the English “livings,” would only show a mind too sordid to appreciate the sacred, the noble, the elevated ground on which they had taken their stand. Indeed, to say a word more in their vindication would be superfluous; and if it should be thought that we have dwelt too largely, or spoken too warmly, on the subject, let it be remembered that the memory of these noble champions of the royal prerogatives of Christ has been now lying under an accumulated mass of ca-

* Baillie’s Letters, ii. 150, 195.

lunny for nearly two hundred years; and that, whilst almost every sect has had its eulogists and defenders, few or none have appeared to vindicate the maligned presbyterians of England.* From this part of the history we learn one lesson, which cannot be too deeply stamped on the mind—That the *government* of Christ, as well as the *doctrine* of Christ, is the object of the unrelenting dislike and hatred of the carnal heart : it is part of “ the offence of the cross,” which has not “ ceased ;” and hence it is that worldly politicians, of all different shades of politics, down to the present day, unite their efforts, like the independents and erastians in the days of Cromwell, to rob the church of her independence, and reduce her “ very much to a level with any ordinary corporation.”

Another cause which hindered the full establishment of presbytery, and frustrated the objects of the covenant in England, was the rapid and unprecedented growth of *sectarianism*. When the Westminster assembly sat down, there were very few dissenters in England—and these were chiefly independents, who had no regular churches, but went about the country disseminating their opinions; but in the course of a few years, during the civil war, they sprang up and multiplied in most appalling numbers. The mere enumeration of these sectaries would be a difficult task. Besides papists and prelatists, the only opponents with whom our Scots presbyterians had to contend, there arose in England independents and Brownists of all degrees, millenarians, antinomians, anabaptists, libertines, familists, seekers, perfectists, socinians, arians, antiscrypturists, fifth monarchy men, ranters, behminists, quakers, and a

host of other sects, nameless and numberless. Errors of every possible shade, heresies the most monstrous, and blasphemies the most revolting, were daily propagated; and the kingdom was convulsed in a religious fully as much as in a political sense.* The prolific nest in which these sectaries were engendered was the parliamentary army. No regular chaplains had been provided for them—the bishops would ordain none but those who would use the liturgy; and thus an immense body of men, who had enlisted in the cause from religious principle, whose passions were excited to frenzy by their struggles for liberty, and who, having recently escaped from episcopal thralldom, were not inclined to submit to any government

* We must not confound the puritans with the sectaries. The presbyterians and good men in the English church were the true puritans; the sectaries were the spawn of the civil war. Those who are disposed to join in the cuckoo cry of intolerance against the presbyterians of this period, would do well to peruse the *Gangræna* of Thomas Edwards, which contains a full account of the heresies, blasphemies, and evil practices of the sectaries. He enumerates no less than one hundred and seventy-six errors and heresies which prevailed at that time. Mr. Baxter's account of them is still more worthy of attention, as, from his well-known liberality, he cannot be justly suspected of partiality. "These are they," he says, "who have been most addicted to church divisions and separations, and sittings and parties, and have refused all terms of concord and unity; who, though many of them were weak and raw, were yet prone to be puffed up with high thoughts of themselves, and to overvalue their little degrees of knowledge and parts, which set them not above the pity of understanding men. The sectaries (especially the anabaptists, seekers, and quakers) chose out the most able, zealous ministers, to make them the marks of their reproach and obloquy—and all because they stood in the way of their designs, and hindered them in the propagation of their opinions. They set against the same men as the drunkards and swearers set against, and much after the same manner, only they did it more profanely than the profane, in that they said, 'Let the Lord be magnified'—'Let the gospel be propagated.' And all this began but in unwarrantable separation, and too much aggravating the faults of the churches, &c. They thought that whatever needed amendment required their obstinate separation, and that they were allowed to make odious any thing that was amiss," &c. (*Culamy's Abridg. of Baxter's Life*, l. 94.)

whatever, were left abandoned to all the excesses of religious enthusiasm. In Scotland, where there was a regular ministry and church discipline, no such fanaticism appeared, even during the stormiest period of her struggles—everything was conducted quietly, and orderly; but in England, deprived of these advantages, every one who deemed himself qualified, assumed the office of preacher; the regular ministry was despised, the pulpits were invaded, and the doctrine taught in them openly impugned by illiterate fanatics and booted apostles.

Alarmed at this prodigious increase of sects and heresies, the presbyterians implored the parliament to use means to arrest the current, by a formal condemnation of them; and, above all, by erecting the discipline of the church, with full power to proceed against them according to the laws of Christ. Without this sanction, their authority would have been disregarded, and the sentences of their courts might have been reversed by an appeal to parliament, which claimed the supreme jurisdiction. The parliament, however, now under the influence of the independent leaders, refused to adopt any such measures; and the only effect of the proposal was, that all parties joined against the presbyterians. This coalition formed the only bond of union among the motley swarm of the sectaries, and the motto inscribed on their banner was—*Toleration and liberty of conscience*. Disagreeing about everything else, they all united in desiring full liberty to preach and propagate their own opinions; though even about this there were differences of opinion. The independents would only extend liberty of conscience to what they called the *fundamentals* of religion; and Dr. Owen drew up a

list of sixteen fundamentals, according to which, not only deists, socinians, and papists, but arians, antinomians, quakers, and even arminians, were excluded from all benefit of toleration.* Others, however, went farther, and advanced the principle, that “it is *the will and command of God*, that, since the coming of his Son, a permission of the most paganish, Jewish, Turkish, or antichristian consciences and worships be granted to all men in all nations.”†

The presbyterians were shocked at such a principle, which seemed eversive of all religion, and some of them, in their zeal against it, condemned the doctrine of toleration itself, in terms which now appear to us overstrained and indefensible; but the more moderate contented themselves with protesting against the government giving a *positive* and *judicial* sanction to the prevailing heresies. These latter did not require their discipline to be enforced at the point of the sword; nor did they insist that the independents and others should be proceeded against for holding separate meetings, as being guilty of any *illegal* act; but they scrupled to grant what these persons demanded—a law directly sanctioning error, or recognising the existence of their heretical sects. They argued that it was one thing not to compel men to come in, and another thing to *open the door* for the encouragement of error, and to inscribe over it—“All kinds of heresies, schisms, and blasphemies, publicly allowed and tolerated here!” They justly considered it a glaring inconsistency, and a violation of solemn vows, for a Christian nation, the one day

* Neal's Hist. of the Puritans, vol. iii. Calamy's Abridgment of Baxter, i. 120.

† Preface to *The Bloody Tenet*.

to engage to God and one another, under a solemn oath, to endeavour the extirpation of heresy, schism, blasphemy, and profaneness; and the next day to declare, by a law of the land, a formal toleration of all these evils: and though entertaining a tender respect for the legitimate rights of conscience, for which they themselves had pleaded and suffered, they could not allow this to blind them to the grievous dishonour done to Christ and his truth, by these interminable heresies and schisms, which were exposing the protestant religion to the scoffs of papists, eating out, like a canker, the very life of godliness, and subjecting the nation to the judgments of Heaven. Both parties were solicitous for peace; but while the sectaries sought peace with error and division, the presbyterians sought peace with truth and unity.*

* Whatever may be thought of the *principles* of the presbyterians on the subject of toleration, it is undeniable that their *practice*, when in power, was marked by the most exemplary forbearance. "The presbyterian party," says Edwards " (though the assembly of divines, the representative body of the city, the court of common council, the ministry of the kingdom, thousands and ten thousands of godly well-affected persons, the kingdom of Scotland, yea, all the reformed churches, own that way), in their love and forbearance to the sectaries, hath been admirable. When the independents were but few, and other sectaries a small number, some half-a-score or dozen ministers, with three hundred or four hundred people, the presbyterians gave them the right hand of fellowship, admitted them to their meetings, opened their pulpit doors to them, showed all brotherly respect to them, even more than to most of their own way; and notwithstanding breach of agreements, drawing away their people, and many high and strange carriages, yet still using all fairness and love, hoping, by brotherly-kindness, forbearance, and a thorough reformation in the church (wherein they have been willing, upon all occasions, to gratify and have respect unto their consciences), at last to have gained them." After recording various instances of the liberality of presbyterians to the sectaries, he adds: " For mine own part, I am confidently persuaded, and so I believe are all wise men that have observed the ways of the sectaries, that if they had been in the place of the presbyterians, having had their power, number, authority, and the presbyterians had been a small number as they were, and should have offered to have done but the twentieth part of that in preaching, writing, &c., against them.

The sentiment of our Scottish divines on this point may be seen from the following extracts: "As for the church of Scotland," says Baillie, "that it did ever intermeddle to trouble any in their goods, liberties, or persons, it's very false. What civil penalties the parliament of a kingdom thinks meet to inflict upon those who are refractory and unamenable by the censures of a church, the state, from whom alone these punishments do come, is answerable, and not the church. That excommunication in Scotland is inflicted on those who cannot assent to every point of religion determined in their Confession, there is nothing more untrue; for we know it well, that never any person in Scotland was excommunicate only for his difference of opinion in a theological tenet. Excommunication there is a very dreadful sentence, and therefore very rare. These last forty years, so far as I have either seen or heard, there has none at all been excommunicate in Scotland but some few trafficking papists, and some very few notoriously flagitious persons, and five or six of you the prelates, for your obstinate impenitence, after your overturning the foundations both of our church and state."* In another work, published about the same time, he says: "If once the government of Christ were set up amongst us, as it is in the rest of the reformed churches, we know not

which the sectaries have done against the presbyterians, they would have trod them down as mire in the street, casting them out with scorn before this time of day, nor have suffered a presbyterian to preach among us, or to have been in any place or office, military or civil, but all would have been shut up in prisons, banished, or else hiding themselves in holes and corners; many godly persons, in some places, having much ado now to hold up their heads to live by them, to preach quietly, to go safely in the streets, or to be quiet in their houses." (*Gangrana*, i. 50, 53.)

* Baillie's Historical Vindication of the Church of Scotland, p. 58.

what would impede it, by *the sword of God alone, without any secular violence*, to banish out of the land these spirits of error in all meekness, humility, and love, by the force of truth, convincing and satisfying the minds of the seduced. Put these holy and divine instruments into the hand of the church of England, by the blessing of God thereupon, the sore and great evil of so many heresies and schisms shall quickly be cured, which now not only troubles the peace and welfare, but hazards the very subsistence, both of church and kingdom; *without this mean, the state will toil itself in vain about the cure of such spiritual diseases.*"*

These unhappy contests about toleration created jealousies between the parliament and the presbyterian party, which ultimately issued in the overthrow of the covenanted cause in England; the sectaries prevailed in defeating all the attempts of the presbyterians to promote unity and peace; and the English presbyterians fell in the noble but fruitless attempt to stem the torrent of errors and divisions which still overspread that country, and which, having found their way into Scotland, continue to distract our peace, to disgrace the cause of protestantism, and to threaten the ruin of our national prosperity. So much for our not adhering to the reformation so auspiciously begun, and violating that solemn compact by which the three nations were bound to prosecute it!

* Baillie's *Dissuasive from the Errors of the Time*, pref., pp. 7, 8.

APPENDIX TO VOL. I.

NOTE A, p. 88.

MR. TYTLER'S CHARGE AGAINST JOHN KNOX.

MR. P. FRASER TYTLER, in his "History of Scotland," has advanced a very serious charge against Knox, of having been guilty of accession to the murder of David Riccio. This extraordinary charge is founded on an unsubscribed and unauthenticated list of the conspirators, which Mr. Tytler found attached by a pin to a document in the state-paper office, and in which list was included the name of John Knox. The proof furnished by this list, though contradicted not only by all we know of the reformer's character, but by another list discovered in the same office, which is well authenticated, and does not contain the name of Knox, and by the explicit disavowal of the conspirators themselves, Mr. Tytler attempts to confirm by conjectures drawn from the supposed sentiments and feelings of the reformer, and his connection with those engaged in the conspiracy. In reply to this charge, the author of the foregoing pages inserted a letter in the *Witness*, which appeared in other newspapers at the time, and which led to a correspondence with Mr. Tytler. That correspondence the author has been urgently requested to subjoin to the present work—a request with which he more willingly complies, as, besides the importance of the subject, it may serve to show how much truth there is in the assertion, which has been made in certain periodicals, that Mr. Tytler's charge has never been answered. It has been answered by others, as well as in the following communication, in which the author has every reason to believe he merely gave expression to the feelings and convictions of the presbyterians of Scotland.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE WITNESS.

SIR,—In the seventh volume of his History of Scotland, lately published, Mr. P. Fraser Tytler has broadly charged the protestant ministers, and particularly John Knox, with having been privy to the murder of David Riccio. The importance which he himself attaches to his discovery of "this fact, now stated," as he affirms rather hastily, "for the first time," appears from his formal announcement of it in his preface, and the space which he has devoted, in his proofs and illustrations, to the confirmation of the charge. As it has been quoted with no small triumph in some newspapers, and none have come forward in defence of the reformer, I hope you will grant me the privilege of your columns for a few remarks on what I consider a most groundless and unwarranted aspersion.

Mr. Tytler begins by stating "the popular belief on this point," in

the language of Dr. M'Crie: "There is no reason to think that he (Knox) was privy to the conspiracy which proved fatal to Riccio: but it is probable that he had expressed his satisfaction at an event which contributed to the safety of religion and of the commonwealth, if not also his approbation of the conduct of the conspirators." This is quoted from "the Life of Knox, edited by Dr. Crichton," which, it is well known, is merely a reprint of the *first* edition, with some notes taken from subsequent editions. The second edition of Knox, from the numerous additions and amendments made in the text, might be said to be almost a new work. I must suppose that Mr. Tytler was not aware of this fact when quoting, as he does throughout the whole of this discussion, from Dr. Crichton's edition; for it is not generally held to be courteous dealing in the literary world to quote from a brother author's first edition, more especially in a historical work which has reached the sixth. The consequence is, as we shall see, that the author's latest discoveries and conclusions are not fairly given. Meantime, I may state, that in the fifth edition of the Life of Knox, the last published under the author's own eye, the latter part of the sentence quoted above runs thus: "If not also his approbation of *the object of the conspiracy.*" (Vol. ii. 146, sixth edition, p. 294.) What this "object" was, of which Knox approved, will afterwards appear.

The only piece of evidence really original, on which Mr. Tytler founds his charge, that Knox "was precognizant of the intended murder," is a stray slip of paper which he found "pinned to" a letter of Randolph to Cecil, in the state-paper office, purporting to be a list of "such as were consenting to the death of David," or "privy thereunto," and containing, among other names, those of "John Knox and John Craig, preachers." This list he supposes to be in the handwriting of a clerk employed by the earl of Bedford, then at Berwick; and having further, as he thinks, discovered that Bedford and Randolph were made acquainted with the conspiracy against Riccio, he concludes that this was an authentic list of those implicated in the murder. This is the first time, I believe, that the public was ever required to credit a charge so seriously affecting the character of any individual, on the faith of a bit of paper, without seal or signature, tacked by a pin to another document. But, granting that Mr. Tytler is as correct as he is confident in asserting the genuineness of this list, I beg to observe—1. That the list bears internal evidence of having been drawn up in haste, and without correct knowledge of the particulars. It concludes with these words: "All these were at the death of Davy, and privy thereunto, and are now in displeasure with the Q., and their houses taken and spoiled." On which Mr. Tytler remarks:—"It is certain that this cannot mean that all whose names are to be found in the list were personally present at the act of the murder; *it should be understood to mean*, that all these were at the murder of Davy, or privy thereto." Now, allowing this to be quite "certain," I ask, was it true that *John Craig* was "in displeasure with the queen," or that *his* "house was taken and spoiled?" So far from this, we know that Craig was rather a favourite with the queen—that he remained in town quietly discharging his duties, and suffered no molestation from her. Must we then insert another convenient *or*, and suppose that this bungling clerk of the pin meant to say, "*or* are now in displeasure with the queen," &c., intending still that Craig was privy to the murder of Davy? If so, I have just as good reason to contend that the last clause should be interpreted in favour of Knox, and to allege that "*it should be understood to mean*," that "all these were either privy to the murder, or are now in displeasure with the queen;" which last supposition certainly was true so far as Knox was concerned. Mr. Tytler seems

document was promised ; he would represent it as a confidential list of the conspirators, prepared by Randolph from his previous knowledge of, or communication with, the parties ; whereas it appears, from Bedford's previous letter to Cecil, that what they promised to send him was an account of "such as be now gone abroad;" i.e., fled to different parts, on the queen's approach to Edinburgh. Knox, we know, was one of these; and there can be little doubt that this circumstance alone, conveyed to them by report, induced Randolph, or the clerk, to add his name and that of Craig, as fugitives, to the list of those implicated in the plot; though, from the distance at which they lived from the scene, their information was, in one point at least, incorrect. This is further confirmed by the fact, that the list is far from being a complete one. It contains only sixteen names; whereas, in the "charge on the persons delated for the slaughter of Riccio," issued 19th March, there are no less than seventy-one, including lords, knights, and servants, all of whom had fallen "in displeasure with the queen," and were "gone abroad"—though neither Knox nor Craig are mentioned among them. (*Keith*, App. 150.) Randolph's letter is written on the 21st March, and yet even then the writer of this is ignorant of the real state of matters. So much for the pinned list.

2. Mr. Tytler has discovered another list of those implicated in the plot, in which no mention is made of Knox or Craig. One would suppose that this might have satisfied him that the former one was incorrect; but with a singular pertinacity, which I leave the reader to characterize, he labours to prove that the pinned document was the genuine list, and the other a corrected copy. For this preference he has given us no reason but his own conjectures founded on the circumstances that the first was sent to Cecil confidentially, while the other was to be submitted to the council of England; and that Morton and Ruthven, in sending their account of the matter, desired Cecil to "amend and qualify anything he thought extreme or rudely handled;" from which very natural request, Mr. Tytler infers it to be likely that they would provide him with an amended list of the conspirators! They would, says he, "have an especial object in keeping the names of Knox and Craig out of the list." And of this object we are required to judge from the following sentence: "It is come to our knowledge," they say to Cecil, "that some papists have bruited that these our proceedings have been at the instigation of the ministers of Scotland. We assure your lordship, however, upon our honour, that there were none of them art nor part of that deed, nor were participate thereof." Words could not be more precise; and, let it be observed, they occur, not in a letter sent to the council of England, but to Cecil, their confidential correspondent. And yet, though Mr. Tytler takes advantage of this distinction to charge these noblemen with having garbled the list, when his object was to inculpate Knox and the ministers, he will allow no weight to it in this case where the effect would be to exculpate them. On the contrary, he actually supposes that, writing to their friend Cecil, they attempted to palm upon him a deliberate falsehood; and he quotes it as only affording an evidence that they had an object in keeping the names of the ministers out of the list! Not content with this, he attempts to find an equivocation in the words "art and part;" because, forsooth, Morton, before his execution, fourteen years after, denied he was guilty art and part in Darnley's murder, although he subsequently confessed he foreknew and concealed it! I may safely leave it to all unbiassed readers to say, if such an interpretation can, with any fairness or feasibility, be put on the language of a private and confidential letter, so solemnly denying that the ministers had used any influence to instigate the proceedings against Riccio, or had any share or participation in them.

3. Mr. Tytler, like all the partisans of Mary, would fain make it ap-

pear that the murder of Riccio, with all its horrible accompaniments, had been deliberately planned long before; whereas, he must surely be aware, that there is the strongest evidence for believing that the conspirators intended only to bring him to public execution, and that the scene in the queen's chamber was entirely owing to the hot-headed king, whose jealousy and hatred of the wretched minion would admit of no delay, and hurried the matter to a premature issue. Spotswoode tells us that the slaughter of Riccio was committed in the outer chamber or gallery of the palace, by the retainers of the nobles, "who had no commandment from the contrivers so to kill him, it being their purpose to have brought him to public execution, which they knew would have been to all people a most grateful spectacle." The same account is given by Knox, Buchanan, and all except those whose object it was to exaggerate matters. Ruthven "takes God to record, that none of these horrid things were meant or done" which the queen and her friends published on the subject; he desired his accomplices only to "carry the man down to the king's chamber." And Dr. M'Crie has added, in a note, which Mr. Tytler might have seen, had he consulted any other than the first edition of the "Life of Knox," that "Douglas of Lochleven, who was engaged in the combination against Riccio, says that it was their purpose to have 'punished him by order of justice, but men proponit, and God disponit otherways, by sic extraordinar means, quhilk truly my own heart abhorred when I saw him; for I never consented that he should have seen used by (besides) justice, neither was it in any nobleman his mind.'" (Vol. ii. p. 145—not in first edition.) This seems to prove distinctly that there was no original intention, even among the conspirators, to assassinate Riccio; nor is this contradicted either by the articles of agreement with the king, or the bond of assurance, as might easily be shown. How much less reason have we for imagining that the ministers of Edinburgh contemplated such a deed! The real object of the conspiracy was, to secure the restoration of the banished lords, and, in this way, the establishment of the protestant religion against the plot which had been formed for its extirpation—an object which the contrivers, it appears, thought they could not accomplish without the execution of Riccio. Although, therefore, it should be granted, in the absence of all positive evidence, and merely on the presumptions stated by Mr. Tytler, that Knox was apprized by some of his friends of the existence of such a conspiracy, he may be supposed to have approved of its ultimate *object* without being charged with foreknowledge of what he himself calls the "marvellous tragedy," which even some of the actual conspirators never contemplated, and which took the whole nation by surprise. In the same light it was, doubtless, regarded by Randolph and Cecil, by Murray, and the other banished noblemen. But unwilling to occupy a single inch of space in your paper beyond what is requisite for the present purpose, I forbear to say more on this point. With regard to Knox's sentiments on the delicate subject of tyrannicide, on which his accuser builds so much, I shall add nothing to what my father has said; only one cannot help smiling to see the use which Mr. Tytler makes of the admission, that Knox might have approved of the slaughter of Riccio "so far as it was the work of God," by insinuating that he "gave a silent consent to it, so far as he considered it the work of God," before the work was done! This is certainly an odd way of approving of the divine procedure in providence. Besides, even Knox's approbation of the deed *when done*, would afford no ground for Mr. Tytler's allegation. Because Mr. Chalmers in his "Caledonia," and Sir Walter Scott in his "Minstrelsy," have expressed their high admiration of the dastardly Hamilton, who assassinated "the good regent" Murray, am I warranted to conclude that these gentlemen were quite capable of being privy to such a diabolical murder?

4. The interpretation which Mr. Tytler puts on the fast which happened to be held at Edinburgh at the time of Riccio's death, is nothing new; he has been anticipated here by poor Walter Goodall, who pretended to see no other design in the lessons and prayers which were ordered to be used on that occasion than to prepare for the murder of "Seignor Davie." The fact, however, is, that this fast was appointed in December of the preceding year, when no such event was contemplated. The ministers did not conceal their objects in appointing this service. They boldly avowed that their desire was to have the banished lords restored; and when it is considered that a bloody plot had been devised by the Guises, and signed by queen Mary, having for its object the *extirpation of all protestants*, it is not easy to say where they could have found passages of scripture more suited to their circumstances than those which spoke of the plots and cruelties of the ancient enemies of Israel. I shall only add, that it seems passing strange, that Mr. Tytler should have adverted so slightly as he has done to one plot with the queen at its head, which, if it had succeeded, according to the designs of the conspirators, would have involved Scotland and England in one mass of carnage—and should have reserved all his indignation for another plot, with the king at its head, which issued only in the barbarous execution of a despicable menial of the court.

5. The last, and indeed the only thing in the shape of evidence adduced by Mr. Tytler, is the fact, that Knox, on the approach of the queen to Edinburgh, retired to Kyle. This is no new charge. It was first stated by Keith (p. 333), and it is repeated by Goodall (i. 257), that Knox "hid himself in the west country, thereby plainly taking upon him to have been one of the contrivers (at least abettors) of the ungodly deed." It is rather fatal, however, to the hypothesis of these writers, that it is not supported by a single contemporary authority. Neither sir James Melville, nor lord Herries, nor the author of *Memoirs of James the Sext*, nor sir James Balfour, nor Buchanan, nor Spotswoode, nor any writer of the period whom I have met with, many of them sufficiently willing to tell, had it been suspected, have hazarded such a conjecture. Knox himself gives a sufficient reason for his flight on the approach of the incensed queen: "All that knew of her cruel pretence and hatred towards them flew here and there." Mr. Tytler says, he "fled in extreme agony of spirit;" and refers, in proof of this, to "his prayer added [prefixed] to his answer to Tyrie." It is plain he never saw more of that prayer than what is quoted in the *Life of Knox*, and doubtful, if he did, whether he might not have misunderstood it. The sins over which Knox there mourns, are "chiefly those whereof the world," he says, "are not able to accuse me." The prayer breathes the spirit of Christian resignation, and that ardent desire to be released from the troubles of this life, which he so often expressed. What Mr. Tytler sneeringly calls his "extreme agony of spirit," was grief for the situation of his flock, his wife, and children. "Tyrie, in his reply, scoffs at this amiable expression of piety," says Dr. McCrie, "and in so doing, the jesuit discovers that he was as great a stranger to conjugal and parental feelings as he was to the rules of logic." (Vol. ii. 209—not in first edition.)

I must not intrude longer on the patience of your readers by adducing the contrary evidence which might be furnished against this charge, but cannot refrain from quoting the testimony of his secretary—"good godly Richard Bannatyne"—who may be supposed to have known his master's character better than Mr. Tytler. When Knox was accused by Robert Hamilton of St. Andrews, of being "as great a murderess as any Hamilton in Scotland, and, therefore, suld not cry out so fast against murderers, he being privy to an attempt to assassinate Darnley at Perth," the reformer no sooner heard of the charge, than he challenged

the defamer to make it good, and Hamilton was glad to retract. Upon which Bannatyne said to him, "Gif I knew my maister to be sic a man, I would not serve him for all the geir in Sanct Andrews." (*Ban. Memorials*, p. 261.) Of the character of Mr. Tytler's attempt to fix this stigma on our illustrious reformer, I shall say nothing. It seems very much of a piece with his charge against the martyr Wishart, which proved a complete failure. And I am much deceived if this renewed attack on our reformers will redound much more to his credit.—I am yours, &c.,

THOMAS M'CRIE.

George Square, Dec. 2, 1840.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE CALEDONIAN MERCURY.

SIR,—In the *Caledonian Mercury* of the 14th December 1840, which has been sent to me here, I find a letter from Mr. Thomas M'Crie, the son of the late learned biographer of Knox, in which, in answer to some remarks I had made in the seventh volume of my *History of Scotland*, on the accession of Knox to the conspiracy for the murder of David Riccio, he accuses me of having sneered at the reformer's grief, and scoffed at his amiable expressions of piety. Such is the only sense that I can attach to the following passage: "Mr. Tytler says, he (Knox) 'fled in extreme agony of spirit;' and refers, in proof of this, to his 'prayer added [prefixed] to his answer to Tyrie.' It is plain he never saw more of that prayer than is quoted in the *Life of Knox*, and doubtful, if he did, whether he might not have misunderstood it. The sins over which Knox there mourns, are chiefly those 'whereof the world,' he says, 'are not able to accuse me.' The prayer-breathes the spirit of Christian resignation, and that ardent desire to be released from the troubles of this life which he so often expressed. What Mr. Tytler sneeringly calls his 'extreme agony of spirit,' was grief for the situation of his flock, his wife, and children. 'Tyrie, in his reply (says Dr. M'Crie) scoffs at this amiable expression of piety, and in so doing, the jesuit discovers that he was as great a stranger to conjugal and parental feelings as he was to the rules of logic.'"

In reply to this strange passage, I beg to assure Mr. M'Crie, that I read the prayer of Knox to which he alludes, and which was first pointed out to me by his father's work, *in the original*; that I weighed it with attention, and on its evidence stated that Knox fled from Edinburgh in great agony of spirit. There is not in the sentence in which I have mentioned this fact, nor in the whole historical remarks on the assassination of Riccio, one word which can by any ingenuity be strained into a sneer or a scoff against the reformer. Indeed, it was not possible there should be; for I can say, with great sincerity, that these remarks, and the whole narrative regarding the accession of the protestants to this conspiracy, were written with a single eye to the discovery of the truth, under a feeling of deep responsibility in bringing forward evidence which implicated a great man, and with a wish to weigh all in the balance of impartiality and charity.

I am quite aware that I am in no way entitled to complain that my arguments should have failed in convincing Mr. M'Crie, or any one else; but I have a right to complain when a gentleman who is, if I am not mistaken, a minister of the church of Scotland, comes forward, and in a public paper represents me as a sneerer and scoffer upon subjects which I hold as sacred as he does himself.

I call upon Mr. M'Crie, therefore, by the name he bears—a name which I have never alluded to without respect—to retract, as publicly as it has been made, an expression which has, no doubt, hastily escaped

him; and when this is done, I promise to show him that he has been equally hurried in his defence of the reformer, and that the main argument upon which he relies is erroneous and untenable.—I am, sir, your very obedient servant,

PATRICK FRASER TYTLER.

*Devonshire Place, London,
December 21, 1840.*

TO THE EDITOR OF THE CALEDONIAN MERCURY.

SIR,—In your paper of Thursday last, I observe a letter from Mr. Patrick Fraser Tytler, in which, referring to mine, which lately appeared in your columns, that gentleman complains that I have accused him “of having sneered at the reformer’s (John Knox’s) grief, and scoffed at his amiable expressions of piety,” and concludes by “calling upon Mr. M’Crie to retract, as publicly as it has been made, an expression which has no doubt hastily escaped him;” adding, “When this is done, I promise to show him that he has been equally hurried in his defence of the reformer.” Granting, sir, that I had been guilty of the piece of indiscretion here complained of, it appears somewhat extraordinary that Mr. Tytler should suspend his reply to a vindication of Knox from a charge so deeply affecting not only the honour of the reformer, but indirectly that of the protestant cause, upon such a condition. But waiving this, I beg to say, that I never represented, nor meant to represent, Mr. Tytler “as a sneerer and scoffer upon sacred subjects.” My words were, “What Mr. Tytler sneeringly calls ‘his extreme agony of spirit,’ was grief for the situation of his flock, his wife, and children.” And then followed a quotation from the *Life of Knox*, referring to Tyrie the jesuit, whom Dr. M’Crie accuses of “scoffing at this amiable expression of piety”—my object in introducing which was to show that this same prayer, to which Mr. Tytler alludes, had been misunderstood before, and that Dr. M’Crie considered that the grief therein expressed might be easily accounted for by the “conjugal and parental feelings” of the reformer. Though I cannot see that my language properly admits of the sense which Mr. Tytler says is “the only sense” he can attach to it, I regret that the brevity requisite in such communications should have led him to such a conclusion. Indeed, it could hardly have been my intention to charge him with “having sneered or scoffed at expressions of piety,” occurring in a prayer of which I had just stated that I had reason to believe Mr. Tytler “never saw more than is quoted in the *Life of Knox*,” and to tell the truth, my impression was, from his referring to the notes in the *Life*, as his sole authority, that he had at the time seen no more of it than what is there quoted, which is, “Now, Lord, put an end to my miserie.” I cannot, therefore, be expected to retract a charge which I never intended to bring.

What I did charge Mr. Tytler with, was his having alluded sneeringly, not to the piety, but to the *grief* expressed by Knox in that prayer. And considering that, when Mr. Tytler spoke of the reformer as having “fled in extreme agony of spirit” from Edinburgh to Kyle, he intended to represent him in the light of a criminal fleeing from justice, I still hold that I was entitled to view his language in the light of a sneer, indicating contempt of the feelings of distress which he expresses in that prayer, and insinuating that the “miserie,” which he prayed God to “put an end to,” arose, not from causes such as those assigned in the prayer, for which every pious mind must feel respect, but from remorse, or a cowardly sense of conscious but unconfessed guilt as a murderer. If, however, Mr. Tytler means to deny that this was his intention in using the words, as I must suppose from his declaring that, in all he has

said, there is "not one word which can, by any ingenuity, be strained into a sneer or scoff against the reformer." I am bound to acknowledge my mistake; and rather than stand in the way of his promised demonstration, willingly express my regret that I should have so understood his meaning.

I may be allowed to add, that I carefully endeavoured to avoid, in my letter, the least expression of personal disrespect for Mr. Tytler, not less from regard for his own character, and the uniform respect with which he alludes to the name of my father, than from aversion to mingle with this question the asperities of private controversy. Mr. Tytler's "impartiality and charity," as a writer, are fair subjects of dispute, and must be tried by another standard than his own professions. Meanwhile, before again bringing, or attempting to substantiate such serious charges against our reformers, he may learn, perhaps, to improve still more in these cardinal virtues of the historian, by finding how easily a charge may be brought against himself, of which he is consciously innocent; and how deeply he feels himself aggrieved by being even suspected of sneering at the piety of the man whom he charges with accession to a barbarous murder.—I am, sir, your most obedient servant,

THOMAS M'CRIE.

George Square, Dec. 25, 1840.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE CALEDONIAN MERCURY.

SIR,—I have read last night, in the *Caledonian Mercury* of the 26th December, Mr. M'Crie's second letter on the subject of Knox and Riccio. He there states that he never meant to accuse me of sneering at the reformer's "piety" but at his "grief," and adds, that if this was not my intention, he willingly expresses his regret for having misunderstood my meaning. This explanation I readily accept. I beg again to affirm, that I had not the slightest intention of conveying a sneer either at the piety or the grief of the reformer, and that, having carefully read over the passage in question, with a wish to alter, in a subsequent edition, any words to which this meaning might be attached, I am unable to find them.

And now, sir, having had an opportunity of distinctly disclaiming a groundless imputation, I must be permitted to close the *public* part of this correspondence. I have promised to show Mr. M'Crie that he has been hurried in his defence of the reformer, and that the main argument upon which he relies is erroneous. This, however, I purpose to do, not by entering into a newspaper controversy, a method ill adapted for the discovery of truth, and quite uncopgenial to my habits, but by communicating to him some additional remarks and extracts, which, probably, I shall afterwards publish.

I have, in conclusion, sir, only to express my best thanks to you for the insertion of my letters, and to subscribe myself your very obedient servant,

PATRICK FRASER TYTLER.

London, 34, Devonshire Place,
Dec. 30, 1840.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE CALEDONIAN MERCURY.

SIR,—Mr. Patrick Fraser Tytler has transmitted to me, according to his promise, some remarks on my defence of Knox, with the view of convincing me that I have been "hurried" in that attempt; and as this promise was publicly given, I consider it my duty to state, with equal

publicity, and without saying any more at present, that so far from convincing me, Mr. Tytler has not touched the main points on which I relied, and has only confirmed me in the persuasion that his charge against Knox is unsupported by any evidence worthy of credit.—I remain, yours, &c.,

THOMAS M'CRIE.

George Square, Feb. 8, 1841.

Here ends the published correspondence. With regard to the *private* communication referred to in the last letter, as Mr. Tytler did not appear to wish or expect its publication by me (whatever use he may intend to make of it in his second edition), I shall refrain from publishing it here. His courtesy in the whole of this correspondence I most gratefully acknowledge. But after Mr. Tytler having apprized the public of his intention to transmit to me documents which would convince me that I had been "hurried" in my defence of Knox, and that my "main argument is erroneous and untenable," it would be leaving him an unfair advantage in the controversy, were I to say nothing more than that he had failed in convincing my mind. I shall, therefore, take the liberty of giving the purport of his communication, and the substance of my reply to it.

The documents which Mr. Tytler sent me referred *exclusively* to one of my statements—namely, that, *even granting* that Knox was apprized beforehand of the conspiracy against Riccio (of which there is not the slightest credible or satisfactory proof), it did not follow that he consented to the *murder* of that person, inasmuch as there was strong evidence that the conspirators themselves did not originally, or unanimously, contemplate his murder at all. In opposition to this, which the reader will perceive was a mere subordinate part of the defence, but which Mr. Tytler is pleased to call my "main argument," the extracts which he sent were intended to show that Ruthven and Morton, with the other conspirators, had resolved, some time before, on the assassination of Riccio; and that their resolution was known to Randolph and Cecil. This is the sole purport of Mr. Tytler's private communication.

In reply to this, after expressing my regret that, the charge against the reformer being public, Mr. Tytler should have contented himself with a private answer to the defence, and my fears that such a method would neither do justice to the memory of the reformer, nor give satisfaction to the public—there being many besides myself who required to be convinced of the truth of his allegation—I remarked, in substance, that his documents still left room for the supposition, which rests on the best authority, that the conspirators did *not* at first contemplate the murder of Riccio. The reports of the murderous designs of the king against Riccio had no doubt reached the ears of the English diplomatists, for he took very little pains to conceal them; but that even Ruthven, the chief person to whom the king communicated his purpose, neither wished nor projected the tragical result, appears from his own account: "The said lord Ruthven counselled him to the contrary, and thought it not decent that he should put hand on such a mean person;" but the king persisting in his design, "Ruthven affixed a day whereon David should be slain, *though he would have him rather to be judged by the nobility.*" (*Keith*, App. 121.) That the other conspirators (if such they can be called) were taken by surprise, appears very evident from the language of Douglas of Lochleven, who was one of them. I give the whole passage relating to the subject from the original manuscript. It is a striking passage, and exhibits the light in which good men at the time viewed the event, both as the doing of man, and as the "disponing" of Providence—in the former point of view distinctly condemning it, and in the latter acknowledging the influence of the prayers of the church

in effecting the deliverance which followed, in terms so simple and devout, that he must be singularly prejudiced indeed who would construe them into an approbation of the crime which was overruled for good: "The king, the queen's husband, noways content with him (Riccio) that he should pretend to rule, [and] that he could get nothing done for him at the queen's hand, took purpose, by [advice] of some other lords of the religion, as the earl of Morton, the lord Ruthven, Lindsay, the secretary, and divers barons, and was of purpose to have given him [his trial], and punished him by order of justice. But men *proponit* and *God disponit* otherways, by some extraordinary means, which truly my own heart abhorrit, when I saw him; for *I never consentit that he should be used by [beside or against] justice, neither was it in any nobleman his mind.* But always [nevertheless] it stayed the forfeiture of the noblemen of the religion at that time; and the *fasts and prayers of the kirk were heard, which never returnit fra God in vain.*" (*Lochleven Papers*, in possession of the earl of Morton.)

To this I may now add the testimony of David Hume of Godscroft, who may be almost termed a contemporary historian, and possessed the best means of information. He tells us that the noblemen had determined that Riccio "should be carried to the city, and have his trial by assize, and so legally and formally (for they had matter enough against him) condemned and executed at the market-cross of Edinburgh." On apprehending him, however, at the palace, which they were obliged to do by the king's orders, their attendants, hearing the noise of scuffling made by Huntly and Bothwell in the court below, and "not knowing what it might import, but fearing that he might be rescued from them, fell upon him and stabbed him with their daggers, *sore against the will, and beside the intention of Morton and the rest of the noblemen, who thought to have caused execute him upon the scaffold, so to have gratified the common people, to whom it would have been a most acceptable and pleasant sight.*" (*Hume's History of the House of Douglas and Angus*, vol. ii. pp. 159-161.) Speaking of Hume, Mr. Pinkerton says: "This writer, who composed his work about the year 1630, has often original and authentic information." (*Hist. of Scotland*, vol. i. p. 216.) "It is true," says Dr. Mc'Crie, "that Hume lived nearly to the year 1630, and might finish his history in his old age; but he was born between 1550 and 1560. Being the confidential adviser and agent, as well as the kinsman, of Archibald (the third of that name) earl of Angus, he had access to the family papers of that nobleman, and to other valuable sources of intelligence." (*Life of Melville*, vol. ii. p. 436.) Writing of him, Andrew Melville says: "I love the sincere zeal and undaunted spirit of that excellent man, and upright friend. Would to God that the equestrian, not to say the ecclesiastical order, could boast of many Godscrofts!" I take the liberty of saying, that the testimony of such a writer is infinitely more worthy of confidence, and more likely to contain the truth, than any flying reports, which, caught up by a stranger, and hastily transmitted to his correspondents without much examination, may have found their way into the state-paper office.

With all the facts on both sides before him, every reader may form his own theory of the matter. To us it appears very plain, that the king alone was bent on murder; that some of the lords, rather than not compass their ends—the removal of Riccio, and the return of their friends—were willing to humour him, though their wishes pointed another way; that these, knowing the king's temper, and not being sure what might happen in the scuffle, took the precaution of getting a document under the king's hand, which might secure them in any event; that some others of them, owing to circumstances or known character, were not intrusted with the secret of a bloody chance at all; that, *a fortiori*, the ministers and Knox were in this last predicament; that, if

apprized of any such design at all, it is highly improbable they were let deeper into the mystery than that a plot was in agitation, which was to issue in the seizure of the favourite, and his being dealt with according to law; but that afterwards, people who knew little of the minute history of the event, and cared little for the character of the implicated parties, above all, who had no objection to attach a stigma to the ministers, ascribed the crime of the few to all who were suspected of being cognizant of any part of the plot, or who had any interest, near or remote, in its issues.

But even granting what Mr. Tytler is so anxious to prove, that there had been a formed and fixed purpose that Riccio should be *assassinated*, this does not affect the "main argument" in my vindication, which rests on the glaring invalidity and inconclusiveness of the only piece of evidence upon which Mr. Tytler attempts to implicate Knox in the guilt of accession to the murder. That evidence, we repeat, does not go beyond the miserable scrap of paper which he found pinned (by some person unknown) to a document in the state-paper office, in which paper is a list (written by some person unknown) containing the names of Knox and Craig among the conspirators who had fled. The incorrectness of this unsubscribed and suspicious paper has been shown, from its containing the name of Craig, who was never suspected of the plot, and never left the city. It is disproved by an authenticated list of the conspirators, in which no mention is made either of Knox or Craig, and by the official lists of the proscribed individuals, published after the whole plot had been revealed by the king to Mary, who would have gladly availed herself of the slightest pretext to have involved John Knox in the odium and guilt of the conspiracy. And it is distinctly contradicted by the conspirators themselves, who declare that the ministers had no share whatever in aiding or abetting the transaction. Beyond this, in all that Mr. Tytler says, there is an entire want, not only of proof, but of an attempt at proof, that the lords made Knox cognizant of their designs. And yet, without attempting to support the authority of this unauthenticated, disproved, and contradicted document, Mr. Tytler contents himself with attaching a mere collateral statement, to which the advocate of Knox might have had recourse, on the supposition that his accuser had proved him to have been cognizant of the conspiracy, but which, properly speaking, forms no necessary part of his defence from the charge. The reader is left to draw his own conclusions.

The conjectures drawn from Knox's sentiments, interests, and connections, by which Mr. Tytler attempts to support his charge, are unworthy of further notice. Mr. Tytler may entertain the opinion that murder was not so alien to Knox's principles, but that he might know of the purpose to slaughter Riccio. But that is merely Mr. Tytler's opinion; and the opinion that a man of Knox's piety, prudence, and intelligence was not likely to be a party to such a proceeding, is at least equally deserving of credit. That there exists in the breasts of some in our day, as there certainly did in his own day, an *animus* against the reformer, which prepares them for believing, on the slightest evidence, or what has the appearance of evidence, that he was capable of the most monstrous crimes, we have no doubt. But we beg to hold Mr. Tytler to the point. Before advancing such a serious charge against the reformer, in an historical work laying any claim to impartiality, he ought to have produced the clearest, the most direct, and the best authenticated proof. Instead of this, his charge hangs by nothing more than the slip of paper already characterized, which, in the opinion of the best judges, has been pronounced as worthless as the pin by which it was preserved from annihilation. It has been justly asked by the talented editor of the *Witness*, in his ingenious reflections on this controversy, "What would be thought of a similar accusation in any judiciary court in the kingdom? or where

could a jury be found of twelve men, of plain sense, who would not at once dismiss it as frivolous and unfounded, without so much as entering the jury-box?"

If this be a specimen of the spirit in which Mr. Tytler means to continue his History, we venture to predict, that it will stamp a character on his work which will cast suspicion on every other statement which it contains. Posterity will pay but little regard to charges so slightly supported, even though they may receive the passing smile of party-spirited reviewers. Meanwhile, however, we cannot but regret the injury which must be done to the cause of truth and righteousness, by the revival of such aspersions; not to speak of our historical literature, which is in imminent danger of suffering damage from a trifling and delusive antiquarianism, which leads its votaries to over-estimate old manuscripts, and to place them above the most accredited documents of history, especially if they happen to be found in the charter chest or a state-paper office.

I shall only add, that several gentlemen of the highest name in the literary world, and critically versed in our national history, to whom I have submitted the whole of this correspondence, published and unpublished, entirely agree with me in concluding that Mr. Tytler has completely failed in his attempt to implicate Knox in this conspiracy, and that the evidence on which he suspends his charge is not entitled to the smallest consideration. Should he return to that charge in a second edition, it may be found advisable to enter into more detail, and to have recourse to some more widely known medium of defence.

Note to Second Edition.—Since the first edition of these Sketches was published, the second edition of Mr. Tytler's History has appeared. Will the reader believe that, notwithstanding the exposure which has been made, in the public prints, of the falsity of his charge against the character of our reformer, Mr. Tytler has reprinted his Appendix on this point word for word as in the first edition, without the slightest acknowledgment of mistake; without even hinting that his historical veracity had been called in question; nay, without changing his quotations from the first edition of the Life of Knox published by Dr. Crichton, though he was told, in the letter which he read, that the statements to which he referred had been considerably altered in the subsequent editions of that work? This may be aristocratic prudery, or it may be puseyite bigotry; but I leave it with my readers to say how far it is consistent either with literary courtesy or with common candour. Henceforth the public will judge what degree of weight is to be attached to any of Mr. Tytler's statements which, in the slightest degree affect the moral and religious reputation of our protestant reformers, or the glorious cause of the reformation.

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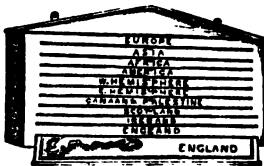
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